

MANAGING THE CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONSHIP: A STUDY OF  
LINCOLN'S MANAGEMENT OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC  
WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF MISSION COMMAND

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General Studies

by

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## ABSTRACT

MANAGING THE CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONSHIP. A STUDY OF LINCOLN'S MANAGEMENT OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF MISSION COMMAND, by MAJ David P. Allen, 95 pages.

The civil-military relationship that exists between the U.S. Army and the legislative and executive branches of government must maintain a foundation of shared understanding and trust in order to function in today's dynamic world. This study endeavors to provide a historical case study of President Lincoln and his leadership of the commanding generals of the Army of the Potomac in order to extrapolate a successful methodology applicable to today's civil-military relationship. This research draws a historical parallel through current U.S. Army mission command doctrinal language towards an understanding of how focusing effort through shared understanding can facilitate not only the issuance, but also the receipt of best military advice. President Lincoln utilized a combination of both personal and positional power to effect change when needed, and to develop a unity of vision toward both action and effort. Lincoln understood that there was a national relationship that must be fostered and developed with his military. Lincoln's leadership of not only his Army of the Potomac but also his cabinet illuminate an example of what a unifying philosophy can provide to a system of balance that exists by design in the U.S. civil-military construct.

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## ACRONYMS

ADRP	Army Doctrinal Reference Publication
GIC	General In Chief
U.S.	<u>United States</u>

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to propose a methodology to facilitate an improvement to the issuance and receipt of best military advice within the civil-military construct by examining the philosophy of leadership that President Abraham Lincoln utilized in his management of the Army of the Potomac. Through the lens of the (United States) U.S. Army's leadership philosophy of mission command, this study will depict how the leadership of Lincoln ultimately facilitated functioning relationships within the civil-military construct. Mission command will be researched within the context of Lincoln and his Army of the Potomac, focusing on the personal and methodical approach that Lincoln took to facilitate his leadership and vision. Ultimately, the research will provide an effective method of managing relationships and capabilities when analyzed through the principles of mission command. Lincoln's example of how he managed these relationships is applicable to a current study of mission command doctrine because it provides context into a currently ineffective form of communication at the strategic level, that being the issuance of best military advice within the civil-military relationship. The focus of the study of key relationships is on the development of the foundational substances of trust, understanding, and ultimately effective execution of a broad concept or vision. While the argument can be made that the philosophy of mission command leadership is intended to enable operational and tactical execution within a complex environment, this study will provide context in order to illuminate how mission command concepts can be applied to strategic military and political relationships. Important to this study is that the mission command leadership philosophy is currently the U.S. Army's

guiding leadership doctrine, and the perspective that senior Army Officers will carry when in a civil-military relationship providing their advice.

A widely discussed professional topic amongst the senior levels of leadership within the Army is the current lack of ability to provide adequate best military advice to senior political counterparts. The purpose of this study is not to attempt to redefine the civil-military relationship within current context. Nor is the purpose of this research to argue the preeminence of a specific theory of civil-military relations such as Elliot Cohen, Samuel Huntington, Morris Janowitz, or Peter Feaver. Rather, the purpose of this study is to provide a historical example of a framework which through a strategic level leadership philosophy, ultimately facilitated a unity of effort within the civil military construct. This study attempts to reach at an ability to not only work within, but maximize opportunity for a confluence of thought, effort and ultimately understanding between political officials and military officers in their respective roles. Studies have been conducted to analyze this relationship in recent context in order to make recommendations to maximize the utility of civil military relationships. Unilaterally, however, these largely military led studies have recommended changes to the management of personalities or development of talents of individual military officers. These changes recommended a development of understanding of political culture within the individual military officer through talent management style career shaping. This study, in contrast, will focus institutionally on opportunities to develop confluences of cultures not through alignment of individual personalities, but through the development of a system that may facilitate shared understanding through shared experience and education.

When applied to Lincoln's presidency, this study focuses on his development of a modern command system.<sup>1</sup> Lincoln's efforts to achieve unity of both effort and action utilized much of what mission command doctrine lays out as a successful framework for establishing a systematic culture of shared knowledge. By establishing this culture, through continuous effort and personal involvement, Lincoln was ultimately able to overcome a gap between political and strategic guidance and operational and tactical execution.

The U.S. Army's doctrine of mission command is defined as "the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations."<sup>2</sup> While it is impossible to say that President Lincoln utilized mission command as a management style or philosophy due to recent development, a thorough study within historical context will show that Lincoln's personal management of key relationships and entities within his prevue mirrored many of the tenets of the doctrine of mission command. This philosophy is based upon six guiding principles. These six principles will be utilized as a framework of analysis when describing Lincoln's leadership and developmental philosophy. The six principles are to build a cohesive team through mutual trust, create a shared understanding, provide a clear

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<sup>1</sup> T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals* (New York: Vintage Books, 1952), 8.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1.

commander's intent, exercise disciplined initiative, use mission orders, and accept prudent risk.<sup>3</sup>

The key relationships and entities that will focus this study are those of Lincoln's general officer corps leading the Army of the Potomac, and his presidential cabinet. The initial focus of study will be towards the presidential cabinet as the President looked to align the disparate political groups following the 1860 election, in order to create unity of effort that might enable unity of action amidst political disharmony. Beginning with the principle of shared understanding, focus will transition to Lincoln's development of the Army of the Potomac. This army was chosen specifically to illuminate Lincoln's utilization and understanding of not only his own leadership, but of his presidency, his military, the problem that the Union was facing and how systematic principles could enable cooperation, communication, and interrelation between policy and military action. The Army of the Potomac was the closest geographical army of the Union to both the bulk of Confederate forces, as well as the Confederate capitol itself. This placed President Lincoln in an unprecedented position to manage this theater of war from his own capitol, while still being close enough in proximity to both receive timely and accurate reports, as well as provide physical presence on the battlefield. This also allowed Lincoln to manage not only his relationship with his Commanding General of the Union Army, who in the beginning of the war was less than a half mile away, but also to reach out to those senior leaders in the army with whom he deemed necessary to directly communicate with throughout the war. The Army of the Potomac was tasked with the

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<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, ADP 6-0, 2.

physical protection and defense of the national capitol early in the war. Washington, DC being the seat of power and physical capitol of the Union gave the President a unique look at his revolving subordinate generals, their management of troops, as well as their overall state of readiness. Therefore, a combination of both proximity and strategic importance led The Army of the Potomac to provide the most fruitful historical vantage point from which to draw parallels between Lincoln's leadership and mission command doctrine.

The Army of the Potomac provides examples of general officers who were regular army officers, all graduates of West Point. Although their graduation dates range almost a decade, they represented the best of what both the people and congress of the Union thought and expected would bring ultimate victory over the Confederacy. A victory through the effective employment and embodiment of military professionalism, as well as an ability to employ their knowledge of military tactics and operations while leading their armies. Many difficult and costly lessons for the Union would prove the difficulty of validating these assumptions, and ultimately disproving them as generalities. However, Lincoln's lot in managing what was an unknown to the whole of government as an effective war machine, is best witnessed in Lincoln's evolution of not only systems of management, but personal understanding within the Army of the Potomac. Both operations and inaction in the west stirred the national will of the Union, but markedly less so than any operational loss or inaction in the Virginia area of operations. After all, this was an original colony, and in fact the birthplace of American settlement on the continent. Union sentiment was closely tied to this representative Army of the Potomac, as well as the congress, which the newspapers of the time reflect. Initially General

Fremont, a political appointee led the Army of the West. Immigrant Soldiers initially manned Fremont's Army of the West. Men Fremont had rallied to his personal cause. The Army of the Potomac on the other hand, from the earliest days was filled with men full of Unionist sentiment from the eastern states.

The Army of the Potomac had the responsibility of battling the bulk of the Confederate Army. The conduct of the war in both battle and policy, will comprise the bulk of this study as Lincoln tried to unify efforts towards governmental policy and military action. As Lincoln's understanding of the war, his presidency, and ultimately the problem facing the nation grew, the decisive engagement of Lee's Army was constant guidance from Lincoln's war policy. The development of an operational and tactical plan to defeat the Confederate Army, however, was an enigma that never reached fruition until later in the war when, the nation as a whole evolved in their understanding of what today would be called a total war concept. Lincoln refused to recognize the Confederacy as legitimate, and always kept the preservation of the 85-year-old republic as his unifying policy.

Lincoln's ability to balance of a methodical and scientific approach with the artful management of personalities developed throughout the war in respect to his military. As he showed his deeper understanding of military operations and tactics throughout the war, largely due to self-study, the ability of the Army of the Potomac to gain victory for Lincoln shaped his leadership style. Lincoln was at times tactically directive in his management of the attainment of his Army of the Potomac's victory. This ebb and flow of military initiative directly led to Lincoln's evolving philosophy towards command of this army as the primary operational executor of his national strategy. This problem was

not only militarily evident however. Simultaneously, Lincoln also had to manage a country that was divided along social and political lines, and whose military had been torn accordingly. Prior to the onset of official conflict, members of President Buchanan's own cabinet were aligning military assets to the Confederacy prior to their exit in terms of both dispersion of the Army and its ballistic capabilities.<sup>4</sup> Lincoln's leadership framework would be crucial to the success of any endeavor. Without unity of effort and action on the part of the Union cause, no initiative could succeed.

This study will reference what will be proposed as a framework of design that Abraham Lincoln utilized in his development of his teams. Within this framework of design, Lincoln's usage of a style of leadership that incorporated mission command style leadership principles and tenets will be analyzed in order to move the discussion towards civil military relations in current context. The specific focus towards the end of the study will focus on the interaction between the civil military construct between the strategic and political leadership and how to facilitate a working dialogue that is facilitated by the example of Lincoln's design. Specifically, a framework of leadership that saw a unity of action resulting in the establishment of the national banking system, the Department of Agriculture, passage of the Homestead Act to name a few political accomplishments. The root of how he was able to accomplish these amazing convergences of effort amongst contrasting interest groups is where this study will focus analysis. More importantly, Lincoln's usage within this framework of leadership to align a federal government and a military, against confederate states around an issue that had broken political parties apart

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<sup>4</sup> Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoires of U.S. Grant* (New York: Charles L. Webster and Company, 1885-1886), 201.

and stressed the nation for decades. Lincoln's ability to identify the true foundation of complex problems through communication and unify actions within a whole of government approach are key to this framework. Lincoln utilized such methodologies as alignment of key political power brokers in both the military and his cabinet and shaping understanding towards a unified vision and intent through a combination of personally managed methodologies. These methodologies parallel mission command doctrine today, and through this conceptual framework, this study will be framed.

Two assumptions were made in order to complete this study. The first assumption is that the philosophy of mission command can be applied not only in a purely military construct, but can be extrapolated to apply to a civil-military construct in both application and practice. This premise is to apply the principles of mission command towards unity of effort in the senior political and military arena. Throughout this study, the understanding of and ability to perceive Lincoln's overall intent and end state by both his civilian and military subordinates was a recurring issue that drove his decisions and actions to either achieve a unity of effort, or place someone in a position of leadership who would adopt his strategic focus. Through the application of his philosophy of leadership, and his establishment of systems to generate an overall unity of action, Lincoln was able to provide the focus, leadership, oversight, and intent necessary to achieve an eventual unity of effort and vision prior to the end of the war.

The second assumption is that the future of conflict will continue to necessitate a strategic and politically aligned style of leadership between the civilian structure and military operations that will be facilitated by shared understanding and unity of vision. As the 2012 Army Operating Concept stipulates, the Army should anticipate changes in



geopolitical landscape, as well as global competition for power and resources stating, “Army forces . . . must possess the capability to translate military objectives into enduring political outcomes.”<sup>5</sup> This is an extremely complicated assumption and only a proposed framework based upon historical example can illuminate.

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<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, *The U.S. Army Operating Concept, Win in a Complex World* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, October 2014), 2-2.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

President Lincoln is the most studied president in American history by a wide margin. Many aspects of his leadership and management of the Union Army have been studied. While not many subjects concerning Abraham Lincoln are unique, a comparison to his framework of leadership and management of both personalities and entities in terms of this recent military doctrine yields a gap in scholarly research.

Lincoln's leadership and presidency are commonly referred to as having saved our republic and redefined the relationship between the federal government and the states. Studies of Lincoln's leadership are numerous as are studies of Lincoln in his prosecution of the war from a political viewpoint. These studies focus on Lincoln's ability to grasp strategy, align teams, communicate with his subordinates, while aligning resources under a unified concept. Notable examples of this are Chester Hearn's 2010 *Lincoln, the Cabinet, and the Generals*, Donald Stoker's 2010 *The Grand Design: Strategy and the U.S. Civil War*. Herman Hathaway, David Donald, and James M. McPherson's understanding of Lincoln as a man, his thought processes, and his methodical analysis were essential to conducting a study of Lincoln and his leadership style. Their pivotal works were Herman Hathaway's 1985 *Lincoln's Presidential Example in Dealing with the Military*, David Donald's 1995 *Lincoln*, and James M. McPherson's 2008 *Tried by War*.

The U.S. Army War College has also produced multiple students who have performed research on Lincoln's use of trust within the context of individual relationship management throughout the Civil War. However, none have expanded their focus beyond

key relationships to provide a comprehensive study of Lincoln's leadership philosophy as it draws parallels to mission command doctrine.

Regarding Lincoln's relationship to his generals of the Army of the Potomac, there is also an abundance of research on both the leadership of the Army of the Potomac, as well as its interaction with President Lincoln. There are also works covering the strategic alignment towards unity of effort within operational and tactical context. However, no substantive works were discovered through the supporting research for this study that specifically concern Lincoln's usage of a leadership philosophy mirroring the tenets of mission command as a framework for developing both his cabinet and strategic level general officers in the Army of the Potomac.

Prior to James M. McPherson's book *Tried by War*, little has been dedicated to the study of Abraham Lincoln in his duties as Commander In Chief of the Army and Navy.<sup>6</sup> Studies in this area largely focus on Lincoln's expansion of his wartime powers and subsequent interpretation of his constitutional constraints. Additionally, there is an abundance of literature focusing upon the Army of the Potomac and its leadership. Bruce Catton's trilogy focusing on the Army of the Potomac, drives at great understanding of the operational and tactical level of warfare through excellent research. His work paints an understanding of both the battlefield and the military climate of the time through not only the eyes of those who fought in the ranks, but also from the perspective of those strategic leaders as well.

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<sup>6</sup> James M. McPherson, *Tried by War: Abraham Lincoln as Commander in Chief* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), 14.

While the studies of personality, leadership style, and cultural framework are useful, adding context to the research question that will be answered through this thesis, there remains a gap that this research will attempt fill. The gap in understanding that this research will attempt to fill is how Lincoln utilized his personality, leadership style, and cultural framework in development of a framework for management and development of subordinate leaders and entities that can be applied to a modern day civil-military cooperative framework that facilitates unity of effort.

A few books will provide the bedrock of this discussion and will serve as baseline research documents based upon their thoroughness of research and applicability to the discussion. These foundational books will be briefly discussed and will cover respectively, Lincoln and his generals, Lincoln as Commander In Chief, and Lincoln within the civil military relationship. Although many other works will inform this discussion, these works provide great insight into Lincoln's understanding and his personal and professional development of a framework that will be analyzed through this study.

T. Harry Williams called Abraham Lincoln's collaborative and facilitative system, a modern command system.<sup>7</sup> This system, and William's analysis thereof will lead to an understanding of historical context for Lincoln and his management of the army and its generals. In studying the evolving of Lincoln's philosophy of command through his subordinates, this research will provide an important key to understanding not only Lincoln's command philosophy, but his efforts to align policy and operations.

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<sup>7</sup> Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, 8.

Lincoln's grasp of strategic theory and his transmittal to and through his generals into operational action, as laid out by Williams, will influence this study's understanding of Lincoln's framework from his perspective.

James M. McPherson's works have guided this study greatly by providing a historical analysis of Lincoln's grasp on strategy early in the war, as well as his development of understanding and what that developed into as a Commander In Chief. McPherson's research depicts how Lincoln sought to build a team of subordinate generals throughout the war who shared his vision, drive, and tenacity. Further, McPherson delves into analysis of how Lincoln framed his problems and designed solutions, always with an eye towards unity. McPherson's main work focuses on Lincoln strictly as the Commander In Chief. In this capacity, McPherson's work will inform this study by providing insight into Lincoln's analytical framework and relationships. McPherson's input into the research, with this focus, adds greatly to the study of Lincoln's philosophy of command as well as his system of managing strategy, and his view of its implementation through his position as Commander In Chief.

Eliot Cohen has also greatly influenced research thus far. Cohen's works within the civil military arena will be a large part of the discussion for multiple reasons. While this is not a study to redefine the civil military relationship, the research is intended to inform the relationship provided for in the Constitution between the politician and the military advisor. The fruitfulness of Cohen's study is a focus on Lincoln specifically and a definition of Lincoln's civil military construct as it existed and was developed.

This study will not delve into a discussion of civil military theorists and preeminence of thought during the civil war. However, a general knowledge of some key

civil military theories will be necessary to understand the gap that exists in the military's ability to provide best military advice, as these theories represent mental models that cultures utilize to understand each other within the civil military construct.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study will be structured around the principles of mission command. The formatting of the research will provide historical context to illuminate how each of the six principles of mission command applied to President Lincoln in his leadership of both his cabinet and the general officers who led the Army of the Potomac. The study will first lay a framework and description of mission command doctrine. Following this, each principle will be examined firstly via an in depth look at doctrinal understanding of that principle, followed by historical application to Lincoln's presidency and leadership framework as analyzed through that lens. The conclusion this study will attempt to establish a bridge between the framework of leadership and understanding that Lincoln utilized and developed throughout his presidency to the current context of the civil military relationship today. The ultimate goal of this study is to portray a methodology that drives at the building of shared understanding and trust, two of the most fundamental golden threads that weave through the mission command doctrinal framework.

The research question will be answered by examining President Abraham Lincoln's philosophy of leadership and his management of both strategic relationships and operational action as both developed concurrently throughout the Civil War. As discussed, Lincoln's general officers leading the Army of the Potomac will focus this research in order to provide a lens through which to view mission command philosophy and apply parallels for study. Study of relationships will focus on President Lincoln's commanders of the Army of the Potomac, Generals George B. McClellan, Ambrose E. Burnside, Joseph Hooker and George Meade as well as those of Lincoln's generals in

chief, Winfield Scott, Henry Halleck, George B. McClellan, and ultimately Ulysses S. Grant. Research on these key general officers will provide insight as each led the Army of the Potomac through a transition point, and a confluence of events that drove President Lincoln's philosophy of leadership to adapt to those he led. This paper will also analyze Lincoln's time as acting co-General In Chief (GIC) with General Halleck and study both the purpose and effect of that decision. Finally, this study will utilize as a backdrop, Lincoln's management of his presidential cabinet through the same lens of mission command principle, and utilize his management of wartime policy to frame an overall understanding of its confluence with an attempt at unity of both effort and action.

In focusing on Lincoln's command and leadership philosophy and framework, research will focus on his performance and interpretation of his duties and responsibilities as Commander In Chief of the Army and Navy. As President, Lincoln had additional duties as head of state, head of the Republican Party, as well as head of the executive branch of government. Research will show that all of these duties, and the disparate subordinate political leaders who managed them, needed to not only be guided in action, but unified in effort within a Presidential vision.

This research will draw comparisons between the evolution of Lincoln's leadership methodology within the framework of a changing nature of not only the war, but of the nation as it reacted to the harsh realities of our country's bloodiest battle in history.



## CHAPTER 4

### BUILDING COHESIVE TEAMS THROUGH MUTUAL TRUST

The purpose of this paper and supporting research is to determine how a leadership construct based upon personal relationship management can or should be applied to a strategic level of the federal government. Further, if applicable, how can this leadership philosophy have applicability in today's civil military construct on a broad level? Both are valid questions in light of the fact that mission command doctrine ultimately drives at the ability of the subordinate to act within broad guidance and execute a military mission at the tactical and operational level. These actions then follow a prescribed intent, in an uncertain or ambiguous environment and utilize disciplined initiative to accomplish the mission. The framework for mission command doctrine is in doctrinal publications of the U.S. Army, primarily Army Doctrinal Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-0, and Army Doctrinal Publication 6-0 both titled *Mission Command*, respectively. Army Doctrinal Publication 6-22 and ADRP 6-22, both titled *Army Leadership*, codify the foundational documents of mission command into a leadership philosophy.

Through this study, Lincoln's example of how the principles of mission command as a leadership philosophy and framework managed the subordinate strategic levels of the Army of the Potomac will be analyzed through a civil-military relationship lens. The application of this leadership philosophy to the strategic level lies in focus on a habitual and long lasting relationship guided by hierarchical structure and common goals. A relationship does exist that must be managed between the Army and both the executive

and legislative branches of government. In application, the Army executes missions as assigned by civilian leaders. Inherently there should be a desire for, and a methodology enabling the achieving of unity of effort towards a common goal. This relationship will comprise the conclusion of this study; however, the fact that there is an ineffective structure in place in the current civil-military relationship is an assumption that drives this study forward. An examination of how Lincoln's example of managing the Army of the Potomac utilizing this philosophy applies to the current civil-military construct is the purpose of this study.

In their simplest form, the subjects that will form the relationships of this study are the United States Army and the legislative arm of the United States Government. The Civil War will provide the lens through which to view this civil-military construct of management and oversight. An examination of the doctrines of both mission command doctrine and army leadership will reveal that the applicability of this leadership philosophy to a higher level relies upon the fact that this philosophy exists within the borders of a relationship. This relationship has changed over time, but during the Civil War Lincoln closely managed most aspects of the relationship himself. The legislature frequently consulted with the military as well. Lincoln however closely managed personal relationships and positions within both his cabinet as well as the military in order to achieve some semblance of unity in both action and effort. Research will show that a cohesive team built upon a foundation of mutual trust and shared understanding within this relationship was Lincoln's goal, and his methodology was a personally managed application of what today compromises the tenets of mission command.

In the United States Army, the execution of mission command as a philosophy is not only the unity of all functions of warfighting as seen by the institution, but more importantly their synthesis. President Lincoln's leadership during the Civil War utilized a leadership framework that mirrored many of these same principles in the alignment of his cabinet, congress, the military, and public sentiment. ADRP 6-0 describes the philosophy of mission command as a human endeavor that enables the commander to balance the art of command with the science of control by providing unity of effort to the mission at hand. The commander applies principles of mission command by balancing and defining these principles within the context of the relationship.<sup>8</sup> The central role of the commander in the evolution of mission command within an organization is paramount.

Lincoln managed this process within the Army of the Potomac as well as his personal cabinet, and his process forms the base of research. At the war's outset, the government was neither prepared nor mature enough to withstand the stresses the struggle would require.<sup>9</sup> Lincoln foresaw the kind of team unity and cooperation that would be required to achieve unity of effort. He knew the need for unified support of what became his singular vision for the preservation of the Union throughout the war at this early stage.

Doctrine defines a commander's need for this system by stating, "Commanders need support to exercise mission command effectively . . . the arrangement of personnel,

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<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 6-22, *Mission Command* (Washington DC; U.S. Department of the Army, 2015), vii.

<sup>9</sup> Bruce Tap, *Over Lincoln's Shoulder* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 31.

networks, information systems, processes and procedures, and facilities and equipment that enable commanders to conduct operations.”<sup>10</sup> T. Harry Williams called what Lincoln developed early in his presidency a “modern command system.”<sup>11</sup> A need for unity of both effort and action drove Lincoln’s efforts to align his strategic team. Lincoln’s use of a leadership philosophy similar to that of mission command began with his development of his modern command system; a system that had many similarities to what mission command doctrine calls a mission command system. ADRP 6-0 describes the mission command system to include personnel, networks, information systems, processes and procedures, facilities and equipment. A strong parallel will become apparent between Lincoln’s system and that of ADRP 6-0 as Lincoln’s management of the Army of the Potomac. This management included his encouragement of innovation such as the telegraph and rail networks.

To understand Lincoln’s use of methods that parallel those of mission command within the Army of the Potomac through the army’s disparate commanding officers, understanding hinges upon how Lincoln’s presidential cabinet was formed. This is necessary to follow Lincoln’s progression of both personal and professional development towards his leadership philosophy. Lincoln’s cabinet relationships were his first, and in most cases, his most successful and longest lasting efforts at utilizing and managing a mission command style of leadership. Lincoln’s ability to influence Senators William Seward, Salmon P. Chase, Simon Cameron, and Edward Bates to serve on his cabinet,

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<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1-5.

<sup>11</sup> Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, 8.

while achieving any kind of success, will add clarity to this study. Lincoln's ability to coalesce this "Team of Rivals" as Doris Kearns Goodwin termed Lincoln's system, will be looked at through the lens of mission command, specifically as Lincoln built his cohesive team and strove to both lead and command a nation at war from within. Key to building of this team was Lincoln's management of the commodity of trust.

Trust will be a foundational principle of this study. Mutual trust within a civil-military construct will provide the lenses to view of all six principles of mission command. In a governmental system however, Lincoln needed to have at least a moniker of trust in an individual prior to offering them a position. Lincoln offered this trust based upon his perception of the individual's reputation, proven competency, and sometimes a capability to be gained from a relationship or position. Union Army's political generals provide an example of this fact. Mission command doctrine states that, "Commanders delegate greater authority to subordinates whose judgement they trust. . . . Commanders build teams within their own organizations through interpersonal relationships."<sup>12</sup> Lincoln spent time and effort fostering key relationships with his cabinet in the days leading up to his inauguration. Lincoln's personal correspondence following his nomination to the Republican ticket smoothed egos, and cajoled his political rivals by offering them a share of the political spotlight. Ultimately, Lincoln's humility combined with his willingness to extend trust to political rivals while downplaying his own victory foreshadowed an understanding that would help Lincoln build both his cabinet and develop an army's leadership.

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<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, ADRP 6-0, 2-2.

The evolution of Lincoln's understanding of his role as President cannot be divorced from his coinciding growth as Commander In Chief. He recognized a need for synchronization in guiding, leading, and fighting the country through the Civil War. Not only a concentration as delineated on a battlefield, but a unity of effort that would ultimately unite and coordinate the efforts of both the Presidential cabinet and the Union Army. However as Lincoln grew in understanding of both the political and military complications of fighting a domestically divided war, he understood that a unity of effort was essential in order to enable action as he, "commissioned officers with the same eye toward coalition-building that he displayed in constructing his cabinet."<sup>13</sup> In the fractioned political and geographic climate of the war between the states, Lincoln looked to obtain a unity of effort by aligning key positions with not only key personalities, but also key backgrounds, support bases, and in some cases financial resources. A key manifestation of these efforts is in the political appointments Lincoln made to the Armies of the Potomac and the West.

As early as his nomination to the Republican presidential candidacy in May of 1860, Lincoln understood that he would need a coalition in order to navigate the waters of public discord that were on the national horizon as many states teetered on the edge of secession. Lincoln recognized the challenge of consolidating a fledgling constituency with little more than personality immediately following his 1860 Republican Nomination for the presidency. He quickly realized that he needed to ally with the same forces that had propelled his rivals to compete for the same nomination. Upon reaching some

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<sup>13</sup> Doris Goodwin Kearns, *Team of Rivals* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005), 369.

semblance of commonality with his opponents, he could unite the strongest personalities of the disparate national political parties.

Lincoln recognized the division that existed and was apparent in the political climate of the 1860 election. To achieve the presidency, as well as posture himself to receive more wide-spread political support if elected, Lincoln recognized the need to consolidate his gains as this new political party progressed to the national stage. Lincoln's efforts to consolidate disparate populations, such as the newly defunct Know Nothing, People's, and Whig party supporters through influencing their former front-runners, would pay dividends as Lincoln later tried to influence a divided congress toward a united banner for the saving of the national identity.<sup>14</sup>

Mission Command doctrine speaks of the necessity of spending time and deliberate effort in overcoming differences in order to occupy common ground.<sup>15</sup> This concept is paramount as teams are built around common interests. Personal relationships and understanding of the commodity of personality were significant strengths Lincoln utilized in his development of commonality with his subordinate commanders and leaders. Lincoln utilized the common ground of preserving the union as an appeal to his political rivals to join his team in furtherance of their collective cause. In terms of overcoming personal differences, Lincoln went to extensive measures to ensure he conveyed clearly his thoughts with humility and clarity. On more than one occasion, this

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<sup>14</sup> Goodwin Kearns, 182.

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, ADRP 6-0, 2-2.

proved essential to the foundation of the relationship, as with that of Secretary of State Seward.

Lincoln's embodiment of personality management was his handling of the drafting of his first inaugural address. As previously stated, Lincoln understood where political strengths and public sentiment collided. One such place was the then Senator from New York, William Seward. Lincoln was aware that Seward was largely perceived by the press to be the logical nominee during the Republican National Convention. Following his loss in attaining the 1860 Republican Nomination, Seward travelled by rail to Springfield, Illinois. Upon Seward's arrival Lincoln boarded the train in order to make his introduction, not waiting for Seward to seek him out, which would have been customary for the day. A seeming reversal of roles for the Republican Presidential nominee, and Seward appreciated the effort.

With this understanding, Lincoln made sure he obtained not only Seward's review and input into his inaugural address, but also to the formation of his cabinet. Correspondence between Seward and Lincoln was extensive, and Lincoln sought him to be a close confidant and advisor during the build-up to his inauguration. In 1861, prior to assuming the office of the Presidency, Lincoln offered Seward the Head of the State Department, which he somewhat dramatically would not accept until the day of Lincoln's inauguration. Seward finally accepted, only after receiving a letter from Lincoln, which was a correspondence of purest humility.<sup>16</sup> Seward then not only accepted the position of the Secretary of State, but also within the first week assisted in Lincoln's setting of a

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<sup>16</sup> Abraham Lincoln, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Roy P. Basler (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 4:273.



course for command of the Union cause. Thus, Lincoln had developed a relationship with Seward initially built upon given respect, and a mutual trust that would grow over time as Lincoln proved his competency to Seward in the months ahead.

Lincoln's methodology of managing relationships is indicative of how he understood that key relationships were necessary to establishing an effective system of management. This example also shows Lincoln's understanding of a core element of mission command doctrine. "Uniting all the diverse capabilities necessary to achieve success in operations requires collaborative and cooperative efforts that focus those capabilities toward a common goal."<sup>17</sup> With this in mind after receiving the nomination, Lincoln was quick to repair any destroyed bridges as a result of receiving the Republican nomination. Throughout Lincoln's selection of his cabinet, he continually sought the guidance of the former rivals that would form his guiding coalition. Lincoln's correspondence with his future Vice President Hannibal Hamlin to both keep him abreast of choices as well as obtain his opinions on the same, helped to gain his confidence as well as assure him a place as a confidant of the future President.<sup>18</sup>

Lincoln's attainment of the remaining members of his cabinet required similar efforts of self-effacement. Lincoln's subjugation of himself was endearing, and unanticipated by lifelong politicians, even as he portrayed his mannerism from a superior political position. In many cases, the senior politicians were taken aback due to Lincoln's genuineness of both character and intent. Sentiment similarly had to be used by Lincoln

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<sup>17</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, ADRP 6-0, 2-2.

<sup>18</sup> Lincoln, 4:180-190.

to win Chase's willingness to accept the position of Secretary of the Treasury. Chase waited dramatically until he was confirmed by the Senate for the position before he stated he would take the job. Lincoln also had to win Simon Cameron over, as an influential Congressman from Pennsylvania who carried weight as a former Democrat allied with the former Whig party.<sup>19</sup> In recognition of not only Cameron's influence within the old Whig party but also his ability to mobilize a militia from a large population base, Lincoln in a letter to Cameron, was gracious and humble as he sought alliance of capabilities and influence as in the building of his cabinet.<sup>20</sup>

Lincoln understood that capabilities, personalities, and strengths would enable both the congress and the cabinet to work in harmony. Effectiveness would be defined in unity of effort toward prosecution of what Lincoln already feared could be a long conflict. Lincoln saw trust as a commodity and forwarded that trust to his subordinates without requiring the same in return. Lincoln took a loss of that trust seriously, and a lack of competency led to a loss in Lincoln's eyes. This will be seen through the decisions to change commanders of the Army of the Potomac later in this study. This was a key principle in Lincoln's relationships, and important in understanding why his subordinate relationships took time to develop. However, in the realm of a leadership philosophy mirroring the tenets of mission command, this facilitated key relationships, providing necessary time to build trust and shared understanding towards Lincoln's efforts to establish a unified strategic vision. The unified strategic vision was singularly, the most

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<sup>19</sup> Goodwin Kearns, xx.

<sup>20</sup> Lincoln, 4:174.

crucial effort of his presidency, and the hardest to both maintain and transmit in the civil-military dialogue.

The specific relationships that President Lincoln honed in the beginning of his presidency showed Lincoln's understanding of what he saw as being essential for overcoming the inherent problems of running a country divided. Lincoln understood a principle codified in mission command doctrine today. He knew that, "Cohesive teams accomplish missions more efficiently than a loose group of individuals."<sup>21</sup> Lincoln brought together those who had sought to lead the country through the coming struggle by providing humble guidance and influence to build a team of those who were united in the same bold ambition. Preserving the Republic.

The element of time is a necessary part of building a cohesive team. Mission command doctrine states, "There are few shortcuts to gaining the trust of others."<sup>22</sup> If there were a proponent for the truth of this statement, Lincoln would be the first to attest. How Lincoln gained and managed the commodity of trust while developing a relationship is the next item of study in Lincoln's usage of a leadership philosophy similar to that of current day mission command. The focus of study in Lincoln's use of trust will primarily be through his commanders of The Army of the Potomac. Lincoln's management of the commodity of trust largely depended upon proven competency with his military officers. This was not true in the cases of his political rivals already discussed however. This made Lincoln's management of senior military officers an evolving relationship skill because at

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<sup>21</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, ADRP 6-0, 6-8.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 2-1.

the beginning of the war Lincoln had no basis for either comparison or background knowledge. The doctrinal definitions of both trust and mutual trust will be discussed in terms of Lincoln's actions, inactions, and demonstrations.

An understanding of the operating environment surrounding the country at this time must be understood before delving into the doctrinal definitions of mutual trust embedded in current day mission command and an application to the 16th President. This is imperative as a stage setter for a time of extreme domestic strife and divided loyalties within the nation. The purpose of this study is not to develop in the reader a comprehensive understanding of the political and social climate of America during the Civil War, nor would an extensive study further the findings of this paper. However, it is imperative to understand the gravity of the decisions that were made during the war by both civilian and military leadership. At stake was the identity of the nation. America was at a crucial crossroads in growth, expansion, and even existence as a unified republic not only domestically, but also internationally. Divisions between the society as a nation ran deep, even though families. Individual men of the day largely spoke plainly and were understood as much by their actions as their words. Men who volunteered for military service were motivated by the romanticized stories of old wars and courage under fire that had won their freedom from England just a generation before.<sup>23</sup> Through this fog of understanding and dichotomy, the republic faced a situation in which the political solution alone would not solve the problem facing the nation. Therefore, Lincoln would guide unity of effort towards a solution, even as he defined his wartime powers and

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<sup>23</sup> Bruce Catton, *Army of the Potomac Trilogy*, vol. 1, *Mr. Lincoln's Army* (New York: Open Road Integrated Media, 1951), 56.

managed an army of a size not seen before in America. With this backdrop of broad understanding, the importance of an integral commodity such as trust can be appreciated as vital to the success of any endeavor during this time.

Another important point to discuss is the matter of trust as applied to the civil-military relationship. The design of the civil-military relationship has been redefined and interpreted by history since the Civil War. However, even during the Civil War period civilian control of the military was constitutionally provided by Article II as managed between the powers of the executive and legislative branches of government as a check and balance in employment of the military. What was true then as now was and is that civilians maintain control over the civil-military dialogue from a position of power. As an element of national power that executes the policy of the nation while protecting national interests by applying military might abroad, the importance of understanding this powerful relationship is paramount. Therefore, examining a methodology that could provide insight into this highly volatile and essential mechanism of management within the American system of government through the lens of history has merit. The principles of mission command as applied to this construct provide essential understanding to an important dialogue. Later in this study, the idea of determinant metrics will be discussed, and trust is one of two, the other being shared understanding. Trust has a determinant relationship to the rest of the principles of mission command leadership philosophy as trust defines amounts, methods, and limits of risk, initiative, and orders as they originate from the higher command. Therefore, Lincoln's management of trust, while personal in practice, provides a foundation of understanding for today's civil-military dialogue as

well as an opportunity to learn from both successes and failures toward better management of the relationship and dialogue today.

The definition of trust has two separate meanings in current Army Leadership doctrine. “Mutual trust is shared confidence among commanders, subordinates, and partners.”<sup>24</sup> While ADRP 6-22, the Army’s newest doctrinal leadership publication, not only defines trust, but also provides the following table for analyzation of effectiveness:

Table 1. Summary of the Competency Builds Trust

Leaders build trust to mediate relationships and encourage commitment among followers. Trust starts from respect among people and grows from common experiences and shared understanding.	
Sets personal example for trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is firm, fair, and respectful to gain trust.</li> <li>• Assesses degree of own trustworthiness.</li> </ul>
Takes direct actions to build trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fosters positive relationship with others.</li> <li>• Identifies areas of commonality (understanding, goals, and experiences).</li> <li>• Engages other members in activities and objectives.</li> <li>• Corrects team members who undermine trust with their attitudes or actions.</li> </ul>
Sustains a climate of trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assesses factors or conditions that promote or hinder trust.</li> <li>• Keeps people informed of goals, actions, and results.</li> <li>• Follows through on actions related to expectations of others.</li> </ul>

Source: U.S. Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 6-7.

This table depicts on the left column those actions which taken in order will maintain a climate of trust within an organization, while on the right the specific measures of performance recommended to the individual leader. ADRP 6-22 further qualifies trust as, encompassing reliance upon others while implying a confidence in their abilities. Trust enhances and builds over time through mutual respect. Communication

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<sup>24</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, ADRP 6-0, 2-1.

facilitates trust, which conveys expectations as well as commitments. The resulting relationship that exists is cultivated over time as these enduring qualities are refined and enhanced through demonstrated competence and accomplishment.<sup>25</sup>

Lincoln's actions and inactions are viewed in light of his philosophy of command towards the Union Army as a whole. A principle of how Lincoln interacted with his subordinate leaders is pivotal as a backdrop to understanding why and how Lincoln performed his various duties and responsibilities. As previously stated in the cases of Lincoln's cabinet, he respected those beneath him until either action or inaction by a subordinate military leader made that moral position untenable. Lincoln's ability to gain and maintain not only trust but also relationships built on respect and competence were tested from the beginning. Lincoln's reaction to the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter demonstrated not only how he built a cohesive team amongst both his military and cabinet, but also how he sought to facilitate trust. These efforts aided his future alignment of personnel and strategy toward a unity of effort through shared understanding of the way ahead from the President's viewpoint.

Lincoln's relationship with General Scott provides clarity to how as Commander In Chief Lincoln managed the commodity of trust within a civil-military relationship. General Scott was the hero of the Mexican War, and the only Officer to have commanded a force anywhere near what Lincoln foresaw as necessary in support of the coming war. Prior to assuming office, Lincoln had praised Scott for his proven competence.<sup>26</sup> Lincoln

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<sup>25</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, ADRP 6-0, 6-7 – 6-8.

<sup>26</sup> Lincoln, 4:137.

forwarded trust to Scott based upon his proven competence and military reputation. Lincoln however quickly came to a decisive point in his relationship with Scott over the initial stages of the war in the attack of Fort Sumter, as well as the overall strategy of preserving the republic. Lincoln, after conferring with his cabinet on March 9, 1861, reached out via correspondence to Scott specifically asking him to look into both the re-supply and re-enforcement of Fort Sumter. Scott replied by stating that necessary action in support of Fort Sumter, as proposed by Lincoln to resupply the fort with men and equipment, would take six to eight months, an act of congress, 25,000 troops, and a fleet of war ships as well as transports.<sup>27</sup> This estimate was outside of any timeline that Lincoln could support the immediate needs of the fort and therefore not helpful or able to meet his objectives. Scott's view was not unrealistic in the sense that the Union Army did grow immensely, and Lincoln himself saw fruition of attacking the enemy from multiple points through the waterways, which did occur later in the war. However, in this instance, Lincoln told Scott what his objective was after asking his opinion, and could not gain a shared understanding of the problem, which will be focus the next chapter as another determinant metric within the mission command doctrinal framework.

Lincoln's erosion of trust in Scott deepened as suspicion grew of his political motivations and loyalties being both a popular and previously victorious General Officer, as well as a native Virginian.<sup>28</sup> Scott was so bold as to even issue orders to Fort Sumter initiating their evacuation. Lincoln's patience in relationship management displayed as

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 4:279.

<sup>28</sup> McPherson, 15.



Lincoln himself ordered the reinforcement of Fort Pickens, and did not relieve the general having received a copy from Secretary of War Cameron. Therefore, according to the mission command chart describing trust, Lincoln showed through personal example, as well as provided opportunities to gain trust within the relationship by continuing to seek Scott's advice and guidance as head of the army. In response to additional requests for advice, on March 28, 1861 of the same month he had provided an unacceptable estimate to the President, Scott submitted a memorandum recommending the evacuation of both Sumter and Pickens in order to "soothe and give confidence to the eight remaining slave-holding States, and render their cordial adherence to this Union perpetual."<sup>29</sup> Scott's understanding of the Confederate sympathies and the Union's ability to retain the moral high ground ran in contrast to Lincoln's. Lincoln was concerned with initiative and codifying a unity of effort in time and space. This disunity led to a lack of trust in the civil-military relationship. While not the final straw, after this point, Lincoln's reliance upon Scott's military advice was no longer trusted as a sole source as he expanded to ask other senior military officers in the capitol such as Brigadier General Montgomery Meigs for their input in the form of war councils and senior strategy sessions.

The formulation of the action leading to the first battle of Bull Run led to another example of Lincoln's management of trust within senior relationships in the military. Specifically, the trust that Lincoln held in the person of Meigs. Lincoln was apparently already leaning towards action at the Manassas junction, however before issuing his

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 17.

decision; he met with what amounted to a “high level war council.”<sup>30</sup> At this war council, Lincoln’s cabinet attended, as did invited general officers of the senior Army staff to include Generals Winfield Scott, Irvin McDowell, and Montgomery Meigs. This war council was an effort by Lincoln to obtain military options in response to the attack on Fort Sumter. The council voted against acceptance of Scott’s Anaconda plan. Both the cabinet as well as the convening council ultimately voted out a plan that would incorporate Scott’s hope for a slow southern return to the union. Lincoln’s attempts to maintain a climate of trust allowed this venue to be an intended open sharing of ideas in support of his overall vision. Meigs, who was able to prove himself capable and of sound advice early to the President, stated “I did not think we would ever win the war without beating the rebels . . . better to whip them here than go far into an unhealthy country to fight them.”<sup>31</sup> In this statement, Meigs secured himself a position of trust in the Lincoln cabinet, as he was able to grasp Lincoln’s intent, and align his understanding with that of Lincoln’s. McDowell, then commander of the field army near Alexandria, briefed a strongly presidentially influenced plan to attack the Confederate forces defending Manassas junction during the meeting, also gaining the trust of Lincoln as he authorized his action in support of this plan following the meeting. The senior officers, specifically McDowell, were worried as to the readiness of the Army in support of this operation, to which Lincoln famously replied, “You are green it is true, but they are green, also; you

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<sup>30</sup> McPherson, 39.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

are all green alike.”<sup>32</sup> Lincoln liked, and adopted McDowell’s plan, which ultimately led to the first battle of the Civil War, the first battle of Bull Run.

McDowell maneuvered his army toward Manassas and despite initial successes, ultimately failed to win a victory at Bull Run. Ultimately, after what turned into a route of his army, Lincoln lost faith and trust in McDowell’s competencies in such a high command, and replaced him. Early in the war, Lincoln did not take the time to develop senior military leaders unless they had proven an added benefit to the military situation, even if doing so meant the complicating of the civil-military relationship. Therefore, Brigadier General McClellan replaced Brigadier General McDowell as a man who had taken action and achieved early success in the western part of Virginia.

Thus, Brigadier General George B. McClellan became the commander of this newly named Army of the Potomac. McClellan was placed in to command of this new army based upon proven action and perceived competency on the part of Lincoln toward McClellan’s actions in West Virginia. Under McClellan’s leadership, the army would train and ultimately deploy into enemy territory to attempt a decisive battle with the Confederate forces. All of this possible due to the foundation of expectation laid by the President for the working relationship that was sought between the Congress, the military and his cabinet as a cohesive team.

President Lincoln’s goal through his facilitation of trust and cohesion within a team construct was to enable unity of effort and attempt synchronization of action. The doctrinal definition of trust within the mission command leadership philosophy speaks to

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

a commodity that must exist in a relationship to allow for subordinate action without senior level interference. Trust as a commodity ebbed and flowed from Lincoln's perspective based upon the commanding officer of the Army of the Potomac. Lincoln's understanding of trust as a commodity was shaped in the early days of the war by both Scott and McDowell. To maintain focus and momentum in the face of uncertainty while facilitating the gaining of an advantage over the enemy, these were Lincoln's priorities. Interpretation of these priorities by his subordinate commanding generals would lead to differing levels of trust in their respective relationships. The foundation of trust in the civil-military relationship is a determinant metric towards the building of a cohesive team as stated in ADRP 6-0. Without mutual trust, the mission command philosophy of leadership cannot be facilitated to function in an ambiguous environment as determined by the subordinate commander. Shared understanding is another determinant metric in the leadership philosophy of mission command and will comprise the next area of research.

### Shared Understanding

Shared understanding is a foundational principle to mission command. Mutual trust and shared understanding form what this study sees as a determinant metric in relation to the other principles of mission command. Depending upon the amount of trust and understanding that exist in a relationship, this degree directly correlates to the superior's determination of type of risk and initiative that present in the outcome. This is paramount when researching the Civil War from the view of the President's dichotomy of civil-military relations. Historically, Lincoln utilized the methodology of literally transmitting intent and mission orders while utilizing subordinate military action to

determine the amount of understanding that existed, which then determined the amount of trust given within that relationship. Therefore, within the doctrinal definition of shared understanding, it is paramount to understand how this tenet of mission command carries enormous determinant weight in this strategic relationship.

Shared understanding is defined as a shared view of the environment and a facilitating factor in problem solving within the mission command construct. Of the six principles of mission command that specifically apply to Lincoln's management of the Army of the Potomac, this principle was the least effectively applied and practiced, by the President and his commanders. Lincoln's writings contain myriad examples of the President's efforts to build shared understanding with his subordinates. The reaching of shared understanding was a significant hurdle to the Union. As will further be discussed relationships, trust, and competing interests became detractors to what should have been unified actions and efforts within a unified command in both strategy and operation. Alignment in purpose to preserve the Union, such as The Committee on the Conduct of the War, there was a diversion of both method and desired leadership, which presented constant detractors from cohesive unity of action.<sup>33</sup>

At this time in history, with the advent of the telegraph and the railroad networks so recently developed, Lincoln had the tools in his possession to facilitate what now defined as a shared view, or a collaborative coalition between himself and his generals. These tools had potential to flatten the previously formidable expanses of both time and distance. The Mexican War provides what Lincoln would have seen as a template for

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<sup>33</sup> Tap, 31.

Presidential action, in coordination with military employment. This period however, was replete with examples of messages coming from the President to dictate action, and due to the tyrannies of both time and distance, as General Scott was inland Mexico; they became virtually obsolete upon receipt. As this was the most recent conflict on a large scale, Lincoln had to develop methods of synchronization as his subordinates developed methods of employment for these new tools of information and transportation.

The opportunity for a senior military officer or political official to receive any concept of the conflict in relative time and space in relation to actions on the ground had never occurred before, less physical proximity allowed. The ability of the senior leader to have any kind of picture of what the operations looked like in the theater of battle as painted by subordinate leaders was better now than ever before. The ability to apply strategic understanding, affect the state of affairs on a given campaign, and receive timely information as to all aspects of the conflict was now possible. As with other types of innovation, to include the development of rifling, carbines, iron clads, and trench warfare during this period, change was not quick in coming in either practice or theory. Although these innovations took time to take a cumulative effect on the outcome of the war, they increasingly created a need for an understanding of the intent of the war, as the war grew costlier in both expense and lives. Nevertheless, opportunity was recognized, and these innovations did assist in the development of shared understanding overall, but not to the potential that existed. Different leaders utilized these opportunities in differing manners. As ultimately seen in Grant, for example, as he oversaw the battles of Cold Harbor and the Wilderness, physical proximity was his preferred method of management. However, the telegraph had capabilities at the tactical level now, and throughout the Civil War, the

telegraph saw increasingly useful techniques at this level, although slow in development. Grant utilized this much more to communicate with Washington than to manage his subordinate commanders with whom he was frequently co-located. Tactics, techniques, and procedures were in place to provide limited repair and establish of both rail and telegraph upon establishment of a military camp. These capabilities expanded as the war progressed, as in the case of Sherman at Atlanta. Ultimately, information was vital in shaping the battlefield for the strategic commander and achieving unity through shared understanding within the concept of time was never more vital to either cause.

Lincoln's method of communicating his understanding to his subordinate generals was determined by the level of trust that Lincoln had in both their abilities and potential based upon their proven competencies. This was not the case in his political relationships as many of his dealings were determinant upon the amount of leverage and political capital that was at stake in the given situation. The fact that Lincoln prioritized fostering understanding towards a level of sharing is evident in his dealings with every subordinate commander of the Army of the Potomac. Whether through personal visits to the battlefield, repeated correspondence and guidance, or holding of councils to create understanding within the cabinet and senior officers in Washington, Lincoln's efforts throughout the war showed his view of understanding to be determinant upon the rest of his civil-military relationship.

Shared understanding is essential to providing a shared view of the collective operational environment, the operation's purpose, problems, and approaches to solving

them.<sup>34</sup> Mission command doctrine describes a necessary culture of collaboration as being paramount to any establishment of shared understanding. Collaboration is defined as two or more people or organizations working together towards a common goal.<sup>35</sup> Communication, dialogue, active listening, and presence are key actions that facilitate the building of shared understanding over time. Mission command doctrine, in both ADRP 6-0 C2, *Mission Command*, as well as ADRP 6-22, *Army Leadership*, echo the fact that shared understanding requires personal effort to transmit the how and why of a mission or operation through collaboration and communication. Strategic relationships between the generals of the Army of the Potomac and the commander in chief, built during this time of tumult, were ripe with incongruent motivations and allegiances.

Individual motivations during this period are important to consider because an individual's understanding was sometimes tainted by personal motivation. As previously stated, Lincoln utilized military action to determine the level of understanding he had with a subordinate general. Officers who had retired their commission returned to the military in large numbers to take part in the Civil War. Many were motivated by a common goal, that being preservation of the Union. However, as is evidenced most clearly by McClellan's term of service followed by his run at the presidency in 1864, the Civil War was a time of opportunity for gain, a point of view through which that many ambitious strategic leaders saw the Civil War. Many politically influential individuals with the ability to organize and raise armies also flooded the ranks, much to the chagrin

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<sup>34</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication 6-0 C2, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), 2-2.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.



of older Officers such as Major General Halleck. Post war statistics portray that, while a long-term view of opportunity, this view was accurate. Civil War veterans comprised seven future Presidents, numerous senators and political leaders, and countless heads of industry as the country rebuilt following the war and rewarding those who had. The previous chapter described shared understanding as having has a foundation of trust. However, like trust, shared understanding is built upon a relationship that, like trust, takes time and effort to build. Time was not a commodity that was abundant from any viewpoint during the Civil War, and Lincoln had to make his attempts to achieve shared understanding through dialogue, presence, and collaboration in short order, and with efficiency. If Lincoln could achieve trust within his team, he could work towards developing shared understanding. If he could achieve shared understanding within that construct, he could work towards what could facilitate a victory over the Confederate enemy. He could work towards unity of effort across his team.

Unity is a key concept within the framework of the mission command philosophy. Shared understanding is a conduit to achieving this unity. Lincoln understood the importance of unity and made extensive efforts to work toward unity of effort politically and unity of action militarily. Through a shared understanding, for which Lincoln was often the conduit, Lincoln attempted to align understanding in Washington through war councils and constant personal communication. Unity was a driving principle used at the strategic level during the Civil War period. However, as the concept of shared understanding is developed in terms of Lincoln's leadership and management style, unity of both military action and political effort were his goal.

Lincoln saw unity through the lens of the Commander In Chief with his Armies, as well as through the lens of the head executive agent of the government. A glimpse of how President Lincoln wanted this unity to work was visible in the first days following the attack on Fort Sumter with his use of executive power. Lincoln called for a special session of congress following the attack, but did not wait to commence preparations for war. Prior to this session, scheduled for July 4, 1861 he had performed many actions towards a unity of effort. Within two weeks' time Lincoln issued a proclamation for 75,000, 90-day militiamen, 43,034 three-year men, added 22,714 to the regular army, attempted to appoint a commander of the Union Army to act as GIC, and ordered the blockade against southern ports.<sup>36</sup> Lincoln in short order had attempted to align the efforts of the judicial, legislative, and executive towards what he saw as necessary to his ultimate understanding of strategic victory for the north. Lincoln was attempting to align his policy with what he tried to turn into an overarching governmental strategy until his death.

In terms of this study, Lincoln's attempt to nest his policy with military strategy at times saw him act as the GIC. These efforts to achieve nesting additionally required him to spend time and effort attempting to achieve this unity of purpose through a combination of communication, dialogue, and presence. These efforts produced a continual effort that never saw full fruition in either concept or execution. Lincoln did organize his development of strategic planning and policy around the counsel of key individuals, gaining their input via an organized strategy session, personal visit, or

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<sup>36</sup> McPherson, 23.

detailed correspondence. This counsel of key individuals was guided by the previously discussed determinant metrics of both understanding and trust. As in the case of General Meigs, Lincoln saw competence and ultimately an alignment in understanding as far as management of the Army and the war. Lincoln respected the elder Meigs and listened to competent expertise and advice on managing human relationships that directly influenced the war effort.<sup>37</sup> In his struggle to achieve unity of effort through shared understanding, Lincoln's biggest hurdle was to overcome the gap between political policy and military action.

Into developing theories of war came innovations that necessitated tactics, techniques, and procedures to utilize them. Some of the most influential were the telegraph, railroad, the breach-loading carbine, and rifled cannon. While not all of these tools of war and logistics were new to the world, their collective broad scale application to conflict was. Therefore necessitating operational consideration and planning. The advent of increased range, accuracy, and volume allowed for a massing and concentration of effects on the battlefield not previously as easily attained. Although not as apparent during the early stages of the war, as in the later battles of Antietam, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, and Petersburg, these tools brought about an evolution in warfare. Sherman commented in his memoirs that the increased amount of fire from the breach-loading carbine would necessitate a thinning of initial lines, increased dispersion, as well as more decentralized action from subordinate commanders.<sup>38</sup> Lincoln realized early in the war

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<sup>37</sup> McPherson, 63.

<sup>38</sup> William T. Sherman, *Memoirs of William T. Sherman* (Canada: Harper Torch, 2014), 2444.

that the Union had numerical and economic superiority. Of the nine million inhabitants in the south, four million were slaves, and an agrarian economy incapable of prolonged conflict on a broad front. Therefore, the operational approach became essential to a strategic understanding in terms of cost, capability, and feasibility in support of a lasting victory by any metric.

In order to develop a strategic understanding that could facilitate any sharing of discussion or common operating picture that Lincoln may be able to develop in regards to the conflict, the President gave himself to much study. Lincoln studied books on military strategy, reports from the military departments as they came in, and obtained other strategic readings in order to develop an understanding of military operations and strategy.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, Lincoln held many war councils and sought the mentorship of Washington generals such as Meigs. Through these key relationships, councils, and self-study Lincoln made vigorous attempts to shape his own understanding from a political perspective in order to facilitate dialogue with his subordinate commanders while putting into context both their action and inaction. Lincoln realized very early in the war, if not from the beginning that the primary military end state would be the destruction of the Confederate Army and not the occupation of territory in the South.<sup>40</sup> His first obstacle was the advice of his senior Generals.

Aside from outliers such as Meigs, who attended senior meetings and often counseled junior officers, to include those who outranked him by position, the President

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<sup>39</sup> McPherson, 38-39.

<sup>40</sup> Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, 7.

had few military confidants or competent advisors. General Scott was gracious and proud but ultimately proved too old and tied to the notion that the nation would heal itself.

General McClellan on the other hand never had an honest relationship with his commander in chief as viewed through the frequent correspondence with his wife.

McClellan attempted to befriend Lincoln's entire cabinet upon his arrival to Washington.

His intention was clearly to have a part in controlling the fighting of the war from more than just a military standpoint.

President Lincoln would make three trips per day to see Secretary of War Stanton. The White House was not connected to the War Department by telegraph necessitating Lincoln to visit Lincoln, however, made nightly visits to army headquarters with Secretary Seward and his personal assistant and prominent Illinois lawyer, Hay. These meetings were daily in frequency, and sometimes more. "To Lincoln it did not seem strange that he, the superior, should go to McClellan, the inferior. Lincoln spent far more time in other people's offices than he did in his own. That was how he found out what was going on, how he sized up people."<sup>41</sup> A famous example of McClellan's lack of trust and inability to forge a relationship is his lack of reception to his own home on the night of one of these visits. Having found him not in the office, the President made a visit to his residence. McClellan arrived home after returning from a wedding, and upon hearing that the President was waiting for him, simply retired to his bedchamber. Lincoln's companions were outraged; however, Lincoln shaped the future by having McClellan

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<sup>41</sup> Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, 44.

report to him on a battle-rhythm basis from then on while in the capitol.<sup>42</sup> To the earlier point of Lincoln's willingness to subjugate his position for the cause of the Union, Lincoln stated following this affront that he would not allow "points of etiquette and personal dignity" to get in the way of winning the war.<sup>43</sup> Lincoln needed McClellan's organizational abilities, and thus far, McClellan had the loyalty of the men. This was a recurring fact and ultimately why Lincoln placed him back into command after Second Manassas after having fired him once already.

On January 13, 1862, McClellan attended a senior strategy session, which was a key element of President Lincoln's efforts to establish shared understanding and unity of effort between his subordinate elements to include his cabinet and senior military officers. Dr. Ethan Rafuse said of these meetings, "In short, it was a meeting of Lincoln's national security community and provided an excellent forum for the pursuit of concordance between the civil and military leadership."<sup>44</sup> At this strategy session, General McClellan refused to devolve his peninsula plan that he had been contemplating for some time. McClellan cited in a side conversation to Meigs that not only would the President leak his plans to the New York Herald the next day, but offered instead to the group:

If you have any confidence in me, it is not right or necessary to entrust my designs to the judgment of others, but if your confidence is so slight as to require my opinions be fortified by those of other persons, it would be wiser to replace

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<sup>42</sup> Chester G. Hearn, *Lincoln, the Cabinet, and the Generals* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, April 2010), 89.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ethan S. Rafuse, "General McClellan and the Politicians Revisited," *Parameters* (Summer 2012): 76.

me by someone fully possessing your confidence. No general commanding an army would willing submit his plans to the judgment of such an assembly, in which some are . . . incapable of keeping a secret so that anything made known to them would soon spread over Washington and become known to the enemy.<sup>45</sup>

Shared understanding and mutual trust were discussed as determinant metrics within the principles of mission command leadership. McClellan never built a reputation of competence with Lincoln after arriving in Washington, and his action did not display an understanding of Lincoln's overall strategy and intent for action. The next day McClellan had a meeting with a *New York Herald* reporter during which he devolved his plan in detail.<sup>46</sup> McClellan saw an opportunity to alleviate pressure for his inaction, while strengthening his democratically political base by this meeting, and he was successful in both.<sup>47</sup> McClellan was a man who was lauded in the eastern papers as the savior of the union, and he wanted to be just that, but on his own terms. Rafuse has proposed that, "Probably the most important substantive factor in undermining Lincoln's and McClellan's ability to achieve concordance was their profound disagreement over operational planning."<sup>48</sup> This assumption is made from a strictly civil-military construct, and this discussion accounts for the relationship of trust and shared understanding that never occurred as neither party could occupy a common ground from which to establish

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<sup>45</sup> Civil War Daily Gazette, "McClellan Refused to Divulge his Plan (If He Even Has One) to Lincoln," January 13, 1862, accessed March 17, 2017, <http://civilwardailygazette.com/mcclellan-refuses-to-divulge-his-if-he-even-has-one-plan-to-lincoln/>.

<sup>46</sup> McPherson, 67.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Rafuse, 77.

the foundation for their relationship. Rafuse later posits that, “a complementary relationship between political ends and military ways and means, ensuring the latter are optimally directed to the attainment of the former, is the most vital outcome of any civil military relationship.”<sup>49</sup> The concordance that Rafuse speaks of eluded the President and General McClellan because their relationship never contained the essential element of mutual trust or effective communication.

Communication in mission command doctrine refers to a constant transmission of information facilitating not only understanding but also awareness.<sup>50</sup> Communication being of a vital nature to the lifeblood of any functioning relationship doctrinally not only transmits information but also ensures a new understanding. T. Harry Williams squarely summed up not only the lack of communication that existed between the policy and military strategy of the Union, but also how that inhibited the development of shared understanding between the President and his Generals by stating simply that neither side understood how to do communicate.<sup>51</sup> Although arguably a great military strategist by the end of the war, Lincoln initially did not understand how to formulate politically strategic thought into military action.<sup>52</sup> “His first generals, especially McClellan, were . . . ignorant of how to establish relations with the head of the government so that they could

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>50</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, ADRP 6-0 C2, 6-12.

<sup>51</sup> Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, 9.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 8.



find out his ideas about strategy and counsel him.”<sup>53</sup> Lincoln’s early interactions with Generals Scott and McClellan were largely exploratory in nature as he attempted to facilitate some kind of shared understanding. Williams further states that, “If McClellan and other generals had known how to talk to Lincoln or had wanted to talk with him about the military situation, the President would have interfered in military affairs less than he sometimes did.”<sup>54</sup> This is, however, merely one aspect of the lack of effective communication. McClellan’s Harrison’s Landing Letter displayed a desire to apply political influence from his military position. He viewed the President’s presence not as an opportunity for unity, but an opportunity for advancement, with a poignant foreshadowing to the next Presidential election.

Lincoln had to develop the understanding that would progress his vision of the future for the immediate and long term through both military and legislative means. Lincoln’s overarching strategic objective defined his policy, which was ultimately, “to restore the Union by force; the strategy of perforce had to be offensive.”<sup>55</sup> Lincoln’s view of the essential need for offensive action was in line with how he viewed the Confederacy. Lincoln recognized the north’s superior numbers and technology as an advantage over the souths’ reliance upon a smaller and poorer population as an advantage to be applied in mass and across multiple fronts.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>55</sup> Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, 7.

Presence equated to placement of emphasis upon a point in either time or geography for many of the political and military leaders of the time. Presence also was utilized in order to provide influence upon a subordinate in order to facilitate dialogue, and encourage direct communication that can be clarified in the moment, not allowing for misinterpretation. Lincoln visited the battlefield throughout the Civil War to visit the Army of the Potomac 11 times for a total of 42 days.<sup>56</sup> Every one of those visits was to provide his presence of either influence to current tactical or operational employment of troops, or to emphasize a period or battle as in Lincoln's visit to Antietam just prior to publishing the Emancipation Proclamation. In contrast, McClellan toward the end of his famed Peninsula campaign did not utilize presence to either emphasize or influence decision or action. When speaking with Porter on McClellan's right flank the day before General Jackson arrived to attack that same flank, he was indecisive and had not seen either conceptually or geographically why Porter wanted to press the attack. He made no decision on the ground, and instead returned to his camp having accomplished nothing. "When the Committee on the Conduct of the War investigated the campaign, it found that McClellan never appeared on the field to take command of troop movements and left all decisions other than withdrawal to his corps commanders."<sup>57</sup> Ironically, President Lincoln utilized the same instance to utilize his presence in order to initiate meaningful communication. Lincoln had been receiving updates of the campaign via telegraph. During McClellan's immobile position on the peninsula, Lincoln had no other way to

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<sup>56</sup> McPherson, xiii.

<sup>57</sup> Hearn, 112.

project his personal authority into the field than to utilize what Tom Wheeler calls, “the long arm of the telegraph.”<sup>58</sup>

President Lincoln attempted to assert his position not only as the Commander In Chief, but also during this time as the acting GIC. On July 8, while McClellan was still on the peninsula, the President came to visit him. A key point in the relationship between McClellan happened upon Lincoln’s arrival to Harrison’s Landing that night. The first thing the young napoleon, as the papers had taken to calling him, did was to place a copy of his Harrison’s Landing letter in the hands of his Commander In Chief.<sup>59</sup> This letter laid out how McClellan saw the running of the military, the country, and what actions were needed to win from not only a military, but also a governmental perspective. McClellan’s letter stated a need for a “Commander In Chief,” or General in Chief of the Army. A close look at McClellan’s last paragraph states that the person should be someone who possesses the President’s confidence and understands his views. McClellan was not this man, even if he was attempting to posture himself so.

McClellan eventually delivered the President the victory he needed to issue the Emancipation Proclamation, following the bloody battle of Antietam. The ultimate lack of trust and understanding between the President and his Commander of the Army of the Potomac in General McClellan, however, had paved a path for close political oversight of the course of military matters for the remainder of the Civil War. Much has been written

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<sup>58</sup> Tom Wheeler, *Mr. Lincoln’s T-Mails* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006), 50.

<sup>59</sup> Abraham Lincoln and Brett F. Woods, *Abraham Lincoln: Letters to His Generals, 1861-1865* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2013), 114, eBook Collection, accessed March 9, 2017, EBSCOhost.

regarding the relationship between McClellan and the President, and much in a negative light. McClellan never held the trust of President Lincoln, and conversely, Lincoln only held promise in McClellan's own eyes but fleetingly. Ultimately, McClellan did deliver Lincoln a core of regular army soldiers that would serve as the bedrock of his Army of the Potomac until they were depleted as cohesive subordinate commands near the end of the war. He had also delivered to him a drilled, outfitted Army that had the size to be employed for the military purposes of the Union. McClellan did have a way with his men though. Bruce Catton in his *Army of the Potomac* trilogy refers to this way with the men as an uncanny way of relating to the men and their romanticized theories of war, back before the major battles began. This having been the main reason McClellan had been brought back to command after Pope's six-day tour of duty, during which he was defeated at the battle of Second Manassas. However, after two major battles culminating in Antietam, McClellan began to once again posture for the GIC position. Ultimately losing the trust of President Lincoln and his cabinet, McClellan was removed from command. Lincoln then began to rely on General Ambrose E. Burnside, who had already turned down the position on at least once occasion citing that he was not the man for the job. Humble, yet not incorrect, the next two commanders of the Army of the Potomac are best described through the principles of mission command dealing with mission orders, clear commander's intent, and the exercise of disciplined initiative. The next two commanders of the Army of the Potomac, Burnside and Hooker, were in command of the Army during a time when operational maneuver and tactical victory.

Communication, presence, and dialogue were methods that President Lincoln utilized in his attempts to gain shared understanding. In speaking of Lincoln's ultimate

achievement of some semblance of understanding with both Generals Grant and Sherman in 1865, Eliot Cohen postulates that only after an operational and strategic military plan that nested with his overarching policy and political end state was developed did he let go the reins of control to his Army.<sup>60</sup> According to Cohen, understanding was sought and not reached through an alignment of political ends, and military ways, and means. This may oversimplify the divide, but does encapsulate the dilemma in which President Lincoln found himself. The amount of control and excursion over the achievement of military matters was an ebb and flow coming from both the President, his cabinet, the Joint Committee on the Conduct of War, the Congress, and private citizens, throughout the course of the war.

Clear Commander's Intent, Mission Orders,  
and Disciplined Initiative

The next three principles of mission command are the issuance of clear commander's intent, the issuance of mission type orders, and finally, the exercising of disciplined initiative by subordinate commanders. This study will conduct a doctrinal review of these terminologies, followed by a definition that will focus understanding of these principles toward the Civil War and Abraham Lincoln as the commander in this equation. President Lincoln will initiate the commander's intent to the strategic level of military leadership who then operationalizes the intent using mission orders. Understanding of initiative will be through utilization by subordinate corps and division level military leaders acting within the framework of the mission type orders they

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<sup>60</sup> Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command, Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime* (New York: The Free Press, 2002), 18.

received from their strategic military leadership. This is not to say that Lincoln was so removed as to not reach down and provide orders to subordinate commanders if deemed essential. However, as a rule for study, the focus will be on the intersection of intent and utilization of mission orders. This is imperative because mission command is designed to be a tactically focused set of principles, here applied to the strategic level. However, as Lincoln applied these principles research will portray the amount of development that Lincoln performed with his subordinate generals in order to achieve shared understanding and move towards mutual trust. Shared understanding and mutual trust are the foundational principles that are determinant in the mission command leadership construct as they allow for a relationship that enables the tenets of the mission command framework to be decentralized in execution and definition.

In mission command doctrine, the intent is issued by the commander, which is then interpreted into mission orders that allow subordinate level disciplined initiative to be carried out within the commander's stated or understood intent. The doctrinal references depict that the commander must provide a clear picture of what the military must accomplish as an end state.<sup>61</sup> This picture should include the commander's definition of successful completion of the military mission. This then becomes a clear intent. Intent is defined in terms of military directives that operationalize the how within broad parameters allowing for interpretation that remains within the intent, from subordinate leaders. These operationalized parameters clarifying the how as issued from the strategic level, become mission orders. Finally, upon receipt of what must be done,

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<sup>61</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, ADRP 6-0, 1-2.

with broad parameters for execution, the subordinate commander executes the assigned mission while utilizing initiative to conduct operations within his understanding of the higher commander's intent. This construct allows the subordinate commander to take advantage of opportunities as they present themselves utilizing disciplined initiative.

Clear commander's intent is defined as a clear and concise expression of the purpose of the operation and the desired military end state. This intent further provides focus to the subordinate commanders in accomplishing their assigned mission without further orders.<sup>62</sup> As President Lincoln defined his role as Commander In Chief throughout the war, he issued his intent to both the strategic and operational levels of war as he gained an understanding of military operations. Commander's intent is discussed first within this triad of principles to not only reflect placement in doctrine, but also the fact that intent must be received from a higher level in order to shape both the type and focus of operations and subordinate level orders.

The issuance of mission type orders is an action defined in doctrine as providing "directives that emphasize to subordinates the results to be attained, not how they are to achieve them."<sup>63</sup> Mission orders are intended to provide focus toward an assigned objective while setting priorities and allocating resources towards the mission's accomplishment.<sup>64</sup> Mission orders are intended to ensure lateral coordination and vertical

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<sup>62</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, ADRP 6-0, 3.

<sup>63</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, ADP 6-0, 5.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

nesting between both adjacent military units and higher echelons of command.<sup>65</sup> As a matter of practice, armies moved and concentrated prior to a battle during this time. This study will research intent and orders as they initiated with Lincoln and issued to his subordinate level general officers as commanders of the Army of the Potomac. Lincoln utilized the mission command leadership philosophy with these three principles primarily as a means of transmitting strategic guidance to his subordinates in an effort to achieve unity of action between the political and military priorities.

As Lincoln utilized these three principles, he had to take into account the speed of information during the Civil War and the power to enable the mobilization of the public in response to either action or lack thereof. The speed of warfare had also increased and changed during the civil war as a confluence of capabilities aligned. The rail enabled strategic reinforcement on either interior or external lines. The true impact of the new battlefield was felt, as information was able to reach the people through the newspapers at a much faster rate than ever before. The information war was as important as actions on the battlefield, and Lincoln recognized this fact as he strove for unity of effort in both political and military action. As the war progressed and the armies of the north and the south became intertwined in an epic struggle of fire and maneuver, waves of infantry as seen in the battles of both Gettysburg and Fredericksburg became of decisive importance not only to the battle, but also to the political climate in support of the war. As the armies maneuvered less, massing and concentrating of weapon's effects that were now easier to reload, with increased range, began to have more of an effect. This coupled with

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.



uncertain situational awareness at the operational level developed a need to fill a gap in awareness at the strategic level. The telegraph and rail bound messengers filled this gap between the strategic and political levels.

As the physical aspects of war changed with evolving weaponry, the strategic level of warfare received enhanced abilities to communicate and move both troops and supplies. This information was of paramount importance in terms of Lincoln's ability to issue mission orders in support of coordination across the breadth of the Union Army. Not until Grant came east in March of 1864 did Lincoln have a general in chief who would coordinate actions across the Union Army as he had done, therefore, until that time Lincoln utilized the information gained through the war department's telegraph office to both send and receive reports to and from his department commanders. This portion of his duties so consumed him as to have a cot placed in the telegraph office in order to ensure that the information he was receiving was as timely as possible. Strategic application of this information in terms of issuance of Lincoln's intent and orders was enabled through both the telegraph and railroad. Both of these advents had the potential to severely affect the tempo of the war. Strategic repositioning of formations along either interior or external lines via rail, as witnessed by the Union during the battle for Chattanooga, became possible in confluence with the development of the rail throughout the war as well.<sup>66</sup> Lincoln even appointed a west point educated railroad executive to manage the lines in order to maximize his ability to both schedule and manage the new line of communication in Brigadier General Herman Haupt. Although these methods

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<sup>66</sup> John E. Clark, *Railroads in the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 173.

were refined and varied in effectiveness as techniques and procedures throughout the war, the capability and opportunities were now present to provide communication and logistical support along a single line of communication. In a letter home to his father, Grant wrote, “In these days of telegraph and steam I can command whilst traveling and visiting about.”<sup>67</sup> Grant was specifically referring in his ability to coordinate movements between his departments that were spread across the country. Sherman also commented on the changing nature of command in war about new technology in his memoirs. “the value of the magnetic telegraph in war cannot be exaggerated, as was illustrated by the perfect concert of action between the armies in Virginia and Georgia during 1864. Hardly a day intervened when General Grant did not know the exact state of facts with me, more than fifteen hundred miles away as the wires ran.”<sup>68</sup>

Lincoln would send messages to his field commanders with great frequency. Some daily messages were routine as to ask, “What news this morning?”<sup>69</sup> The opportunity for shared understanding and knowledge, the ability to provide mission type orders, and ensure feedback through the wire flattened time and changed the civil military paradigm. Trust and understanding have been presented as determinant factors in the application of mission command leadership philosophy, and with increased information, the relationship between the military and civilian oversight was more important than ever. Lincoln understood that and managed those personalities personally in accordance

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<sup>67</sup> Wheeler, 143.

<sup>68</sup> Sherman, 2452.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 112.

with the determinant factors of Lincoln's amounts of both trust and understanding within the specific relationship. Therefore, Lincoln's mission orders were at times prescriptive based upon his level of understanding and trust in the subordinate general to carry out his orders. McClellan's lack of understanding of Lincoln's intent on action and application of pressure upon the Confederate Army led to Lincoln's constant prodding and oversight. This pattern repeated throughout the commanders of the Army of the Potomac until Major General Meade served with Lieutenant General Grant in the later campaigns of the war. At this time, strategy and operation in Grant and Meade respectively received interpreted policy through Halleck as received from the President.

Before that construct existed in late 1864, what Lincoln expected was initiative with the use of disciplined followership from his subordinate commanders. Doctrine defines disciplined initiative within mission command as subordinate interpretation of intent when prescribed orders and guidance no longer fit the situation.<sup>70</sup> Drivers of this unforeseen circumstance, often in the operational or tactical realm, often manifest as opportunities that allow for seizure or maintenance of the initiative over the enemy. This initiative develops the situation to solve unanticipated problems within a framework of understanding guided by the commander's intent through the mission order they have received.

The study of initiative in the Civil War is an interesting subject. Much of the discussion of initiative is very similar to what military discussions consist of today in terms of positions of relative advantage as well as selecting the time and place of battle

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<sup>70</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, ADP 6-0, 5.

rather than the enemy. Grant, for instance, mentions initiative twelve times in his memoirs. He speaks mostly from the strategic perspective about initiative in terms of speed, mass, concentration, and seizure of opportunity in terms of terrain. Some examples of this are Grant's recounting of his efforts to mass forces prior to a movement on Corinth in order to be able to maintain the initiative once the fight commenced by having reserves able to respond quickly.<sup>71</sup> Grant also portrays a story of managing risk with Sheridan in his move to retake Harper's Ferry. Grant was not comfortable with Sheridan taking the initiative due to the risk of opening a clear avenue of approach to the capitol if he failed.<sup>72</sup> Ultimately, due to a level of trust and understanding gained through an in-person meeting, Grant not only allowed the initiative but also, provided Sheridan with additional resources in prosecution of his initiative. Grant speaks of operational initiative in terms of positional advantage via terrain or the principle of surprise in combat.<sup>73</sup> Sherman similarly discusses initiative in the same context, and at times speaks of initiative as a commodity to be traded for other advantage such as choice of terrain.<sup>74</sup> Sherman describes such a trade in his description of his awaiting the Confederate initiative following his seizure of Atlanta, as it would require the enemy to resort to some desperate campaign because of the loss of Atlanta and the clamor in the south.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Grant, 442.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 1570.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 1010.

<sup>74</sup> Sherman, 1637.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

Sherman's option had been to extend his lines in support of General Canby's efforts to open the Alabama River with the risk being an over-extended forward line of troops.<sup>76</sup> In both instances, the emphasis was upon managing initiative as a commodity.

Lincoln saw initiative as the military's ability to move toward an assigned objective or end state quicker than the enemy, whether in position or in deed, as in the case of McClellan in October of 1862 following the Battle of Antietam.<sup>77</sup> Lincoln saw the strategic importance of a move following Antietam as he did in the need for offensive action following the success at Gettysburg. However, in both instances the generals failed to see Lincoln's imperative for movement and thus did not apply strategic initiative to those situations. Grant however understood, and with a thinking in line with Lincoln's coordinated movements in the later stages of the war to provide the enemy with multiple dilemmas and an inability to assume the offense by seizing the initiative and reinforce any successes.

The framework of military management that Lincoln inherited in 1861 was the position of GIC of the Army as overseen by the Secretary of War. The GIC's duty was to provide counsel and strategic guidance to the civilian oversight in the persons of both the president and the congressional oversight. The GIC also maintained a position as the primary leader of that force should the army be called upon to accomplish national objectives. In the early 1860s however, the Army was dispersed across the nation and was focused mostly on Indian suppression and security of western movement. What this

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> McPherson, 268.

meant to Lincoln was that he had to build an effective system of management through developing subordinate commanders towards a common goal with a clear intent and policy.

T. Harry Williams discusses Lincoln's development of a modern command system, and later attributes the development of the American military system's modern roots to Lincoln's strategic leadership structure that took shape in 1864.<sup>78</sup> Williams specifically describes the senior military advisor position, the GIC position, and the Commander In Chief position. In modern day-terms he is speaking of the Army Chief of Staff, the Joint Chief of Staff, and of course the Commander In Chief. Williams depicts this pairing as a management construct facilitating span of control and oversight. Mostly, the position that Halleck filled was a facilitator who served as a conduit to relay translation in the civil-military relationship.<sup>79</sup> When looking at the utilization of these pairings however, they were not historically acting in the positions or with the authority that they hold today. Lincoln in 1864 had constructed a framework of facilitating shared understanding, through the issuance of clear commander's intent.

Within this structure, Lincoln had found a way to bridge the gap between policy and operations at the strategic level. Stanton's position assisted Lincoln in deciding ultimate strategy for the war effort from the cabinet level to include the structure and leaders of the strategic level of the Army.<sup>80</sup> The position of Halleck as senior military

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<sup>78</sup> Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, 14.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 296-297.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

advisor melded Lincoln's understanding of strategy with a military mind who understood operational planning and the intent Lincoln would want accomplished through a given action. Lincoln utilized the command structure of the military to nest strategic planning with his policy, and if they did not, he would do so for them to the point of maneuvering departments in the field, as with McDowell in fall of 1862, (prior to the development of the senior military advisor position). He utilized the positions previously described to inform strategy while interpreting policy. This was effectively done through a relationship that had produced understanding with Halleck, and an executor of that policy as found in Grant after his actions in the west provided Lincoln with proof that his operations had incorporated his policy and strategic guidance. Halleck's relationship with Lincoln was not perfect; in fact, there was a lack of professional respect from Lincoln to Halleck. Finally, the GIC position that Major General Scott had occupied at the beginning of the war developed into a manager of the nesting of policy as received through both the President and Halleck, as executed by the departments across the Union Army. From start to finish a military operation would have the opportunity for nesting and understanding in this senior military command and control structure. However, there was an understanding between them of what needed to happen in strategic action. Lincoln personally managed, developed, and fostered the understanding that would ultimately lead to trust through the individual relationships of the men that held those positions. Halleck had in fact been in conference with Lincoln for some time since his arrival from the western theater. Halleck performed the duties of conferring with Lincoln and relaying an understanding of his intent to Lieutenant General Grant in the field.

While Grant acted as the GIC, he utilized Halleck to relay information, interpret reports from his subordinate elements, and most importantly to act as a liaison and advisor to Lincoln for execution of military matters.<sup>81</sup> This allowed Grant to command, receive commander's intent through a military filter in Halleck, while preserving his ability to oversee military operations personally and allow for strategically disciplined initiative between his armies in the field as they closed in on Lee's forces toward the end of the war. The shaping of the general officers that had commanded the Army of the Potomac prior to, and including Major General Meade, had shaped Lincoln's understanding of military matters. This shaping had also led Lincoln to manage abilities and personalities closely, either via correspondence or presence. In some cases, he utilized both. For example, in Lincoln's development and management of the Army of the Potomac under McClellan, Lincoln on two occasions utilized presence to either spur action as with his post Antietam visit, or to prod action as in Lincoln's visit to Fort Monroe during the Peninsula Campaign.

The issue of pressure is important to discuss in the same context as the management of subordinate initiative during the Civil War. This pressure manifested itself in terms of political as well as public pressure via the news agencies, visitors to the white house, and visitors to strategic level headquarters amongst other means. This pressure was focused towards both the military as well as the President by the press and the Congress to act. The public cries for victory and onward movement were so prevalent that President Lincoln wrote frequently to Horace Greeley, the founder of *New York*

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 301.



*Tribune*, in order to shape the headlines and enlist the public will.<sup>82</sup> Pressure was present in the lead up to the first battle of Bull Run. Lincoln was being pressured cries for military movement upon Richmond, which prompted him to issue McDowell an objective of Manassas and ordered an immediate offensive.<sup>83</sup> Brigadier General McDowell resisted by commenting on the lack of training, organization, and discipline of his soldiers, but was famously told by Lincoln that soldiers on both sides were green alike.<sup>84</sup> Pressure in this situation drove Lincoln to override military advice and force action, which ultimately resulted in a route of Union forces and a loss of command as Lincoln interpreted the loss to mean that McDowell was incapable of managing a large force in the field.

The person of Major General McClellan provides the best example of a subordinate commander's ability to lead within the civil-military construct during the Civil War. McClellan encountered enormous pressure from Congress in the persons of the Committee on the Conduct of War, the Congress itself, the President, as well as the Union population to conduct an attack on the Confederate Army. Therefore, McClellan will be studied with an understanding that the outside influence of pressure had a constant place next to McClellan's receipt of clear commander's intent and mission type orders from his commander in chief. Shared understanding and mutual trust are again reiterated to be determinant metrics within the mission command leadership philosophy, and will

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<sup>82</sup> Abraham Lincoln, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, vol. 5, ed, Roy P. Basler (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953).

<sup>83</sup> Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, 61.

<sup>84</sup> McPherson, 268.

shed light on understanding of McClellan's complicated relationships with his civilian oversight.

McClellan received clear commander's intent throughout his term as Commander of the Army of the Potomac. McClellan's first opportunity to act within that intent also accompanied a clear mission type order in the body of Lincoln's January 27, 1862 General Order Number One. The President's intent was clearly stated as movement of not only the Army, but also the Navy prior on February 22, 1862 in offensive action against the Confederate Army via a plan of McClellan's choosing. Lincoln utilized a mission type order by not dictating a route, formation, or scheme of maneuver, but an objective and a general time frame with a clear start date. The order clearly stipulated the objective of Fortress Monroe as the army objective. The actions against Fortress Monroe were strategically timed to coincide with military actions taking place within the western theater near New Orleans.<sup>85</sup> By providing this mission order with clear intent, Lincoln was attempting to provide for a unity of effort through his guidance while achieving a unity of action across multiple fronts against the Confederate Army.

Lincoln's effort to achieve unity of action was evident, and he had nested his policy with his strategic guidance, the order also illustrated his lack of confidence in McClellan. McClellan did not obey his orders instead offering his own Urbana plan, which Lincoln ultimately approved. McClellan began execution of his plan after Lincoln's deadline. Once on his campaign, Lincoln questioned his lack of movement and advance on multiple occasions. Ultimately, Lincoln utilized personal presence to attempt

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<sup>85</sup> McPherson, 71.

to influence action during a visit to McClellan's forces near Fortress Monroe. Lincoln was unable to meet with McClellan upon his arrival as McClellan had moved forward to the front lines. Lincoln then learning that Norfolk was relatively unguarded, conducted a reconnaissance himself, and subsequently ordered a naval element to take Norfolk with a small ground contingent.<sup>86</sup> This resulted in not only the seizure of Norfolk, but also the sinking of the Confederate ironclad the Merrimack. McClellan carried a negative balance with President Lincoln in terms of the determinant metrics of understanding and trust however, McClellan held sway over the troops and was ultimately kept in position to for the cohesion of the Army of the Potomac as well as their organization.

McClellan's unwillingness to work within the framework of the civil-military relationship for the purpose of mutual understanding and trust derailed Lincoln's ability to achieve a positive balance with McClellan through the determinant metrics of understanding and trust. Because of this negative balance, Lincoln had narrower definitions of risk and allowance for disciplined initiative at the strategic level during McClellan's command. A good example of this is Lincoln's unwillingness to reinforce McClellan with McDowell's corps during his Urbana campaign as Lincoln saw the threat from the Shenandoah Valley differently. Upon interpreting the number of soldiers planned for the defense of Washington during McClellan's campaign to be insufficient, Lincoln conferred with Stanton and stopped McDowell's corps from loading transport for the peninsula. The protection of the capitol will be discussed in respect to Lincoln's management of prudent risk as a risk that he was not willing to let be decided by his

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 89.

subordinate commanders. Lincoln went so far as to create the Army of Virginia in order to create a force he could employ himself, and did so with clear instruction and mission orders during the McClellan's Urbana campaign. Not only did McClellan have a negative balance of mission command's determinant metrics, he also lacked mutual respect with Lincoln, which although is not a principle of mission command, is a fundamental principle in the maintenance of any professional relationship.

After keeping McDowell's corps and creating the Army of Virginia, he had placed Brigadier General Pope in charge, who had come from the western theater. Stonewall Jackson was attacking in the Shenandoah Valley, and in response, Lincoln himself attempted to coordinate what Sheridan would ultimately successfully perform against Ewell in 1864 that was to fix the Confederates in the valley and flank him with another force. Therefore, Fremont was ordered to Harrisonburg as a part of the Army of Virginia. However, claiming that Morrefield, 35 miles northwest of his objective was easier for his men, he marched his men there instead. Combined with slow movement from McDowell's men, Lincoln's efforts to block Jackson's escape as McDowell flanked his army failed. Lincoln recently removed both Fremont and McDowell from respective commands therefore having low balances of trust and understanding with both generals. In view of this fact, Lincoln issued prescriptive orders and clear intent and objectives, only to see his orders not carried out. Lincoln's efforts at fighting an army, while good in theory did not achieve his intent and Lincoln's attention shifted to McClellan's repeated calls for reinforcements.

McClellan repeatedly blamed the administration for hamstringing his operation on the Urbana campaign, even though at times painted logs were his obstacle to movement.

“I will in no way be responsible for it, as I have not failed to represent repeatedly the need of reinforcements”<sup>87</sup> were McClellan’s final thoughts upon his lack of success at the Urbana campaign. McClellan did not concern himself with managing a relationship of understanding with Lincoln and subsequently failed at efforts to align his military operations with Lincoln’s policy of defeating the Confederate Army and preserving the Union.

Following the battle of Antietam, Lincoln once again questioned McClellan’s willingness to fight and press the initiative with the enemy. He even recommended the operational intent to cut off Lee’s lines of communication to the South and trap the force north to force a fight, an operational maneuver he had attempted with his Army of Virginia in 1862.<sup>88</sup> This action by Lincoln centers upon Lincoln’s analysis of risk versus McClellan’s analysis of the readiness of his army for pursuit and further offensive employment. Lincoln clearly valued the strategic importance of continued pressure and strategic initiative over the risk to soldiers, which he viewed through long-term risk and rate of attrition. Had McClellan had a balance of Lincoln’s trust and understanding based upon a relationship, the mutual nature would have prompted a different understanding. However, Lincoln began to anticipate an opportunity for McClellan’s removal. Therefore, shortly after a personal visit to McClellan and following a fight with Lincoln over the command of the soldiers at Harper’s Ferry, McClellan was relieved of command.

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<sup>87</sup> McPherson, 95.

<sup>88</sup> Harold Holzer, *Lincoln on War* (New York: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2011), 164.

Command of the Army of the Potomac transitioned to Brigadier Ambrose E. Burnside. Burnside's command time spanned less than three months. Prior to taking command, Burnside had turned down the command twice before, citing both his inability and deference to McClellan. Burnside however understood clearly Lincoln's intent to be movement towards and decisive engagement of Lee's Army. Following Antietam and the expulsion of Lee's army from the north, Lincoln wanted to capitalize on what victory there had been. Burnside's initial plan for offensive maneuver on Lee's Army was sent to Halleck. By this time, Halleck had grown in understanding in his strategic relationship with Lincoln, and Halleck knew Lincoln would not like the narrow approach that Burnside was proposing.<sup>89</sup> Halleck travelled from Washington to meet with Burnside who insisted upon the plan with minor changes. Upon returning to Washington Halleck submitted the plan to Lincoln which did meet Lincoln's intent which had been to attack near of Fredericksburg. This was a key point in Lincoln's early relationship with Burnside and Lincoln decided to forward Burnside trust by allowing him latitude to execute his plan by assuming risk in Burnside's plan. Lincoln consented to Burnside's plan by stating that his plan would only succeed if his operation were performed quickly.

Movement was not quick, however, and Lincoln visited him personally to ensure that his intent was understood. Lincoln viewed this pause in operations as an increase in the risk to the operation and wanted to build his trust and understanding with Burnside to enable his success. Lincoln brought Burnside back to a war council with Major General Halleck and they discussed strategy together. Lincoln proposed simultaneous crossing

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<sup>89</sup> Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, 195.

sites outside of Fredericksburg in order to detract from the main crossing. Ultimately, Burnside did act and decisively attack the enemy. Burnside however could not manage multiple crossing sites and his delay made the attack predictable, as was his avenue of approach as he pressed the attack on Lee's Army on Mayre's Heights outside of the city of Fredericksburg. Burnside's attack resulted in the loss of more than 12,000 Soldiers, and yet another commander for The Army of the Potomac who lost the trust and confidence of President Lincoln based upon perceived lack of military competency.

"Fighting" Joe Hooker had been injured at the battle of Antietam and was almost offered the command instead of Burnside. In fact, the command was offered to Brigadier General John F. Reynolds who turned the position down. In early 1863, the President understood that the Army of the Potomac needed an inspirational leader, and Hooker did hold sway with the men. President Lincoln's choice of Hooker was interesting, as Lincoln was aware of the negative statements that Hooker had made in public regarding the conduct of the war. In his letter to Hooker upon his appointment, Lincoln attempted to establish understanding and trust from the outset. Lincoln stated that Hooker's bravery, skill, and confidence were assets, and if used out of service and not pride they would be useful to the nation. Lincoln admitted knowledge of Hooker's recent comments of America's apparent need for a dictator and told him,

I have heard, in such way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the Army and the Government needed a Dictator. Of course, it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those generals, who gain successes, can set up dictators. What I now ask of you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Holzer, 183.

Therefore, Hooker understood from the outset of his time as commander of the Army of the Potomac that he was to “go forward, and give us victories.”<sup>91</sup> Having received a clear intent that allowed for interpretation at the operational level, Hooker took command of the army.

Hooker began his actions within the Army of the Potomac by infusing changes that increased morale and ultimately aided in the Union victory such as streamlining the supply system, improving field hospitals, cleaning unhealthy camps, improving the quality of food and life overall for Soldiers in the field, and establishing the Cavalry Corps.<sup>92</sup> Improvements to the army combined with the sway of General Hooker’s reputation allowed for Lincoln an opportunity to issue an amnesty for deserters to rejoin their elements as the Army of the Potomac. Lincoln waited for Hooker’s plan after issuing his intent, and in April visited the Army of the Potomac. Lincoln viewed favorably Hooker’s efforts towards managing and improving conditions for his army. Lincoln witnessed an improvement in both morale and organization. He and Hooker discussed operational options and Lincoln gave him a memorandum that he wanted Hooker to keep in mind, “Our prime object is the enemies’ army in front of us, and is not with, or about Richmond.”<sup>93</sup> Lincoln had also provided additional advice following his

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 184.

<sup>92</sup> McPherson, 164.

<sup>93</sup> Lincoln, 6:164-165.



understanding of both Antietam and Fredericksburg's lack of commitment of all available troops. Lincoln told Hooker, "In your next fight, put in all your men."<sup>94</sup>

Having personally delivered a military end state and an objective to his subordinate commander, Lincoln returned to Washington and received a detailed plan from Hooker within a few days. Hooker started his relationship with Lincoln as Commander of the Army of the Potomac by building his trust and understanding through initial plans and actions. Hooker's initial plan incorporated Lincoln's intent and guidance. Hooker's problem at the battle of Chancellorsville was Hooker. In April Lincoln had commented that he was worried Hooker had been too confident.<sup>95</sup> However, when in an approach march on Lee's army, instead of pressing the initiative, he instead pulled into a defensive posture. General Meade, who would later take command from Hooker, found himself on Lee's flank at one point outside of Chancellorsville. However, due to restrictive orders enabling a concentration of movement out of the Wilderness, Meade was told by a fellow corps commander that they were to wait for the rest of the Army in the wilderness. The next day Lee took the initiative to keep Hooker's army in the Wilderness and fight there. Hooker famously stated that Hooker had lost faith in Joe Hooker, and that was the cause of defeat.<sup>96</sup> General Hooker maintained a defensive posture despite advantage of both maneuver and terrain, ultimately costing the Union

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<sup>94</sup> McPherson, 176.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 323.

<sup>96</sup> Bruce Catton, *Army of the Potomac Trilogy*, vol. 2, *Glory Road* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1952), 211.

17,000 casualties. He did not commit all of this Soldiers to battle as Lincoln had advised, leaving a full two Corps and part of another out of the fight altogether.<sup>97</sup>

Hooker had shown an understanding and an ability to apply Lincoln's understanding towards a military plan. Ultimately, though, Hooker lacked the ability to implement those plans in the face of the enemy. Lincoln recognized the strategic implications of another defeat, and so did the Confederate Army who moved on a second invasion of the north a month after their victory at Chancellorsville. Lincoln's thoughts were of the strategic implications of a loss as he stated, "My God! What will the country say?"<sup>98</sup> A clear intent for further action from Lincoln was sent via letter urging movement out of planning not rashness. Hooker had lost trust with Lincoln therefore; Lincoln's willingness to assume risk and allow Hooker to act with initiative was less prevalent in their relationship. The President asked if Major General Hooker had a plan, and that if one were not made already to inform him so that he could assist in the formation of one.<sup>99</sup>

Hooker proposed to attack the rear guard of Lee's army at Fredericksburg, which both Halleck and President Lincoln vetoed. Lincoln went so far as to make an analogy of an ox being stretched across a fence being attacked from both sides and being able to effect neither in his denunciation of Hooker's plan. Hooker lost even more trust with Lincoln at this point as he displayed even less understanding of Lincoln's intent.

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 176.

<sup>98</sup> Holzer, 187.

<sup>99</sup> Lincoln, 6:170.

Hooker's next proposed move ultimately lost Lincoln's confidence in him when he urged a move south on Richmond after becoming evident that Lee was moving north. Lincoln countered with what was now to him a familiar refrain, "Lee's Army, and not Richmond, is your true objective point."<sup>100</sup> Hooker ultimately took a stand during his maneuver north on trying to fold the Harpers Ferry garrison under his command. Upon receiving a no from Washington, in response he tendered his resignation, which was promptly accepted.

While historical timelines would indicate that Brigadier General Meade had taken over the Army of the Potomac from Hooker at the most inopportune time with the retrospect of the looming battle of Gettysburg, he had been with the army throughout the war and was intimately aware of the men's capabilities and training. Therefore, when Brigadier General Buford chose the initial positioning at Gettysburg not five days after Meade had taken command of the Army, Meade was prepared. Ultimately, Meade's orchestration of Gettysburg met with Lincoln's approval, and in combination with Grant's victory at Vicksburg, the war had taken a marked turn for the better in July of 1863. Meade had been in contact with Washington throughout the battle, and Lincoln's feedback was congratulatory.

As with McClellan after the battle of Antietam, President Lincoln wanted General Meade to press his victory on Lee's army before he could again cross the Potomac to the south. Meade utilized his understanding of the situation and did not utilize a strategic view of the situation. Halleck filled that void and prompted him to pursue Lee's Army.

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<sup>100</sup> McPherson, 350.

Meade had received the President's guidance and intent and understood both. However, at a war council held by Meade, only one corps commander voted for an offensive, which was to obey the clear order they had received. Meade listened to his subordinate commanders instead and no large-scale offensive movement against Lee occurred prior to his crossing of the Potomac south. This lost the moniker of trust that Meade had built with Lincoln after Gettysburg, and ultimately caused Lincoln to look outside of the Army of the Potomac for a leader who could press his intent upon the Confederacy.

In the months following Gettysburg, Grant maneuvered his Army of the West achieving victory in Chattanooga. During this same period, Meade had followed Lee's army south, and while sending parts of two Corps to assist in the Cumberland valley in Tennessee, he made little progress against Lee. As Grant continued success, Lincoln offered him command of the Army of the Potomac, which he declined. He stated that an officer grown from within the ranks must command, and upon being appointed to command all armies of the Union on March 9, 1864, Grant commanded from close proximity to Meade, but never supplanted him.

Grant came east with a large amount of proven competency in the eyes of Lincoln who afforded him a large share of the determinant metrics of understanding and trust which translated into decentralized action on the part of Grant. Grant understood that President Lincoln considered the Army of the Potomac his key to success, and that Lee's Army of Northern Virginia was what he saw as the decisive point and objective that would accomplish his view of the military's end state.

The Commander In Chief believed he had tested and proven level of shared understanding with soon to be Lieutenant General Grant, and trusted his judgement.

Grant had also proven that his expertise could be trusted in both organization as well as battle. At this point in time, President Lincoln's military structure truly took shape, as this structure would guide the Union battles through the end of the war. The Congress revived the rank of Lieutenant General, which had not been worn since Washington himself. The structure that results between Grant, Halleck, and Lincoln, form President Lincoln's construct for management and facilitation of his civil-military relations. This formation of position in order to merge policy and strategy was streamlined as Grant utilized presence and leadership to operationalize nested strategy as he positioned himself with Meade for the rest of the conflict.

Lincoln led six generals through their leadership of the Army of the Potomac. These generals spanned times of service from as short as six days in the case of Pope, to one year, nine months and eleven days in the case of Meade. Lincoln grew in understanding of military matters, military education, and how to facilitate the divide between policy and action, albeit a negligible success prior to Grant. Lincoln repeatedly issued clear intent as Commander In Chief, with clearly stated objectives through mission type orders. With some generals, Lincoln was prescriptive in issuance of guidance due to a lack of trust and shared understanding. However, where this understanding lacked, Lincoln would intervene, often in person, to fill this gap in their relationship. While this cannot be recommended as a model due to the personal nature of development by Lincoln, the point of the effort to create shared understanding within the civil military construct is the lesson that should shape current day.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

During this study, the implication that mission command type leadership philosophy can be applied to the strategic level was both discussed and researched. Mission command type leadership was analyzed to determine that a basis for understanding and trust allow the other elements of mission command to be applied in terms of defining risk and the amount and type of initiative the superior either allows or seeks in their subordinate. In viewing the relationship of the legislative to the military branches of government, these same concepts can not only be applied, but also developed if given proper emphasis and time. Lincoln managed this process intimately and grew capabilities that ultimately culminated in success during a wartime effort. Although Lincoln's government was smaller and with less of the modern day bureaucracy, in principle, the civil-military dialogue needs a foundation of understanding and trust in order to be effective.

During this study, President Abraham Lincoln's leadership provided a method of managing the civil-military relationship. Lincoln's specific method however, was more through a philosophy than a system. Lincoln did view the civilian-military dialogue as emanating from a strategic and national level relationship, which he personally managed and developed over time. In developing and fostering that relationship, Lincoln utilized a leadership philosophy that in many ways mirrored the tenets and principles of mission command. The goal of this study is to add literature to a gap in analysis at the strategic level towards a pivotal relationship in the elements of national power while providing an historical example that can feed a future methodology to bridge the gap in the civil-

military divide. Mackubin Thomas Owens states that in order to effect positive change in the civil-military relationship, “Establishing trust requires that both parties to the civil-military bargain re-examine their mutual relationship.”<sup>101</sup>

While the goal of this study is not to redefine civil-military theory, the research does necessitate an understanding of what makes the political and military dialogue in today’s construct. Major General William E. Rapp has written extensively on this subject focusing his writing on the methodologies in which the Army Officer Corps can better facilitate the relationship with their civilian oversight and provide more effective military advice. Rapp analyzes the timing, frequency, and quality of this advice while posturing for the fact that there are implied truths to the civil-military dialogue that must be agreed upon by both sides.<sup>102</sup> The importance of adding literature to the study of the civilian-military dialogue is essential due to the importance of the effectiveness of this relationship and potential outcomes. Each of the discussions that happen at the strategic level concern the application of military power on behalf of the nation as an element of national power, thereby affecting the nation as a whole either directly or indirectly. The implication then follows that if this dialogue has such national importance, can the nation afford to say that optimized potential can ever be reached? In fact, the effectiveness of civil-military dialogue is a constantly studied subject in both civilian circles of political science as well as those of the military. The need to achieve a level of effectiveness

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<sup>101</sup> Mackubin Thomas Owens, “What Military Officers Need to Know About Civil-Military Relations,” *Naval War College Review* 65, no. 2 (Spring 2012): 85.

<sup>102</sup> William E. Rapp, “Toward Strategic Solvency: Ensuring Effective Military Voice,” *Parameters* 46, no. 4 (Winter 2016-17): 23.

within a national level relationship is where Lincoln's philosophy of civil military thought has merit in terms of this study as well as the civil military dialogue.

Key to Lincoln's interpretation of the civil-military divide was how he managed the national relationship as being symbiotic. As has been emphasized in this study, Lincoln attempted to use this mutually beneficial nature of both the legislative and military arms of the government to provide for a unity of effort and action. Another essential reason for studying Lincoln's management of his commanders of the Army of the Potomac is the emphasis that Lincoln placed upon establishing a team through the development of understanding and trust. In addition, key to Lincoln's interpretation of the civil-military divide is the metric of time. Lincoln did not have time, nor does any commander in chief, to develop relationships during a wartime scenario. This was not helped by the fact that, "With an almost arrogant assurance, Lincoln's first generals believed that war was a business to be carried on by professionals without interference from civilians and without political objectives."<sup>103</sup> Therefore, with limited time and an unreceptive audience, Lincoln had to build a relationship in order to manage priorities and allocate resources. As previously discussed, Lincoln viewed relationships as a vital commodity and was not willing to assume risk in his management thereof either in his cabinet or his military. However, in light of the views of his first commanders of the Army of the Potomac, Lincoln had to mold a new understanding into the management of the war effort in a short amount of time. Through the telegraph, personal correspondence, personal presence, and clear guidance, Lincoln always attempted to articulate clearly his

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<sup>103</sup> T. Harry, Williams, "The Military Leadership of the North and South" (U.S. Airforce Academy Harmon Memorial Lecture #2, 1960).



expectations to his subordinates. This allowed Lincoln to manage his commodity of personnel, while ensuring receipt and measuring effectiveness.

Lincoln managed his personal relationships according to the previously discussed determinant metrics of trust and understanding. Lincoln utilized these metrics to determine the amount and types of intent, orders, risk, and initiative he would direct or encourage in his subordinates. In the previous discussion of time, Lincoln utilized key methods to share and develop understanding by flattening time and space with use of the telegraph and railroad to visit the front in either person or letter. Therefore, Lincoln managed these relationships, ultimately defining a construct within the management of the war that capitalized upon shared understanding and trust in the persons of Lieutenant General Grant, Major General Sherman, Major General Halleck, Admiral Porter, and Secretary Stanton. This core facilitated shared knowledge, received and disseminated information, and determined action while keeping the President informed in the person of Halleck and via correspondence.

In looking at a current day construct of civilian control of the military and dialogue towards the development of policy and the accomplishment thereof through military means, the issue that can be extrapolated from Lincoln's leadership philosophy and construct is that understanding and trust do not occur as inherent parts of the civil-military construct. A deliberate effort must be taken to habitually manage the understanding that will form the foundation of a relationship at the national level. The issue of proponency and management thereof is the first of many issues that arise during a discussion of this relationship.

Several more issues develop into obstacles in the achievement of such a habitual nature of management in terms of the idea of buy-in and a willingness to manage any facilitating program over time.<sup>104</sup> Identification of a point of leverage within the timeline of the individual military officer is a key opportunity that is currently being capitalized upon within the current professional military education structure. During attendance at the Army War College, as a part of their curriculum, the Army War College currently conducts visits to the capitol and congress in order to facilitate an understanding of both the importance, and scope of the national-level relationship. In addition, the opportunity for congressional staff to take part in the Army War College curriculum is available in a limited capacity. The lack of proponency for a proposed solution leads to funding and prioritization issues for both advancement and attendance within a given congressional calendar year.

Military professionals must retain an apolitical viewpoint in execution of their assigned duties according to their oath of the office. Without shared understanding in the civil-military relationship, this apolitical imperative may be misconstrued as a lack of teamwork toward a political objective.<sup>105</sup> An unequal dialogue exists within the civ-mil relationship, which, without shared understanding can lead to an ineffective receipt of best military advice as well as a lack of mutual trust. There is a need for, “a dialogue, in that both the civilian and military sides express their views bluntly, indeed, sometimes offensively, and not once but repeatedly and an unequal one, in that the final authority of

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<sup>104</sup> Rapp, 23.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

the civilian leader was unambiguous and unquestioned.”<sup>106</sup> Therefore, the idea of buy-in or at least a critical understanding is essential to any potential solution to the bridging of the civil-military gap from both sides of the dialogue.

It is unrealistic to imply that through application of this leadership philosophy, these bureaucratic leviathans could achieve unity of action without a deliberate effort at management and an investment of both time and resources by both sides of the civ-mil divide. However, this should not be cause for study without application and action. As Donald Stoker states in his analysis of the civ-mil construct, “The quality of their interaction is often a determinant to the efficiency with which a nation fights.”<sup>107</sup> By design, a system that did not have a healthy amount of friction would not move forward as a principle of physics. However, through a detailed view of the level of importance and management of a national relationship as conducted by the most studied President in American history, the civil-military dialogue can benefit from his example of focused effort and human interaction. Only through this kind of habitual management of the capital of human capacity for effective dialogue can America hope to secure an effective civil-military relationship that can face the challenges of a decentralized and ambiguous world in the future.

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<sup>106</sup> Cohen, 247.

<sup>107</sup> Donald Stoker, *The Grand Design: Strategy and the U.S. Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 54.

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